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SERMONS

ON

THE PRINCIPLES

UPON WHICH

THE REFORMATION

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND WAS ESTABLISHED;

PREACHED BEFORE THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR 1796,

AT THE

LECTURE

FOUNDED BY

The late Rev. JOHN BAMPTON, M.A.

CANON OF SALISBURY.

By ROBERT GRAY, M.A.

LATE OF ST. MARY HALL, AND VICAR OF FARINGDON, BERKS.

SOLD BY MESSRS. RIVINGTONS, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;
MR. ROBSON, NEW BOND-STREET, LONDON;
AND BY MR. COOKE, AND MESSRS. FLETCHER AND HANWELL,
OXFORD.

1796.

IMPRIMATUR,

JOHAN. WILLS,
VICE-CAN. OXON.

WAD. COLL.
Maii 13, 1796.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

AND REVEREND

THE HEADS OF COLLEGES

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

THE

FOLLOWING SERMONS,

PREACHED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT,

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED.

EXTRACT

FROM THE

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN BAMPTON,

CANON OF SALISBURY.

——" I give and bequeath my Lands and " Eſtates to the Chancellor, Maſters, and " Scholars of the Univerſity of Oxford for " ever, to have and to hold all and ſingular " the ſaid Lands or Eſtates upon truſt, and to " the intents and purpoſes hereinafter men- " tioned; that is to ſay, I will and appoint " that the Vice-Chancellor of the Univerſity " of Oxford for the time being ſhall take and

" receive

" receive all the rents, iſſues, and profits
" thereof, and (after all taxes, reparations
" and neceſſary deductions made) that he
" pay all the remainder to the endowment
" of eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, to be
" eſtabliſhed for ever in the ſaid Univer-
" ſity, and to be performed in the manner
" following:

" I direct and appoint, that, upon the firſt
" Tueſday in Eaſter Term, a Lecturer be
" yearly choſen by the Heads of Colleges
" only, and by no others, in the room ad-
" joining to the Printing-Houſe, between
" the hours of ten in the morning and two
" in the afternoon, to preach eight Divinity
" Lecture Sermons, the year following, at St.
" Mary's in Oxford, between the commence-
" ment of the laſt month in Lent Term, and
" the end of the third week in Act Term.

" Alſo I direct and appoint, that the eight
" Divinity Lecture Sermons ſhall be preached
" upon either of the following ſubjects—to
" confirm and eſtabliſh the Chriſtian Faith,

" and

" and to confute all heretics and ſchiſmatics
" —upon the divine authority of the Holy
" Scriptures—upon the authority of the
" writings of the primitive Fathers, as to
" the faith and practice of the primitive
" Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord
" and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt—upon the Di-
" vinity of the Holy Ghoſt—upon the Ar-
" ticles of the Chriſtian Faith, as compre-
" hended in the Apoſtles' and Nicene
" Creeds.

" Alſo I direct, that thirty copies of the
" eight Divinity Lecture Sermons ſhall be
" always printed, within two months after
" they are preached, and one copy ſhall be
" given to the Chancellor of the Univerſity,
" and one copy to the Head of every Col-
" lege, and one copy to the Mayor of the
" city of Oxford, and one copy to be put
" into the Bodleian Library; and the ex-
" pence of printing them ſhall be paid out
" of the revenue of the Land or Eſtates given
" for eſtabliſhing the Divinity Lecture Ser-
" mons; and the Preacher ſhall not be paid,

" nor

" nor be entitled to the revenue, before they
" are printed.

" Alſo I direct and appoint, that no per-
" ſon ſhall be qualified to preach the Divi-
" nity Lecture Sermons, unleſs he hath taken
" the Degree of Maſter of Arts at leaſt, in
" one of the two Univerſities of Oxford or
" Cambridge; and that the ſame perſon
" ſhall never preach the Divinity Lecture
" Sermons twice."

PROPERTY OF
PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

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2 Tim. ii. 19, 20.

Nevertheleſs the foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity. But in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour. Page 259

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PROPERTY OF
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SEMINARY

SERMON I.

JOHN iii. 19.

And this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds were Evil.

IN deſcription of the character and progreſs of religion, as connected with the hiſtory of mankind, it has been a ſubject of complaint, that its influence hath been inadequate to the grandeur of its diſpenſation, if not inconſiſtent with the benevolence of its deſign. The complaint, if ingenuous, muſt originate from haſty and confined views of the real intention and effects of religion; or from inattention to the obſtacles invariably excited by the corruption of thoſe beings to whom it hath been addreſſed.

Revelation, contemplated in its firſt dawn, opens but to diſcloſe the ruins of a fallen nature, and the triumph of a malignant power. The enmity of that evil, of which the ſacred writers deſcribe the origin, domineered with ſuch aſcendency and vigour, that the Spirit of God, like the Angel who wreſtled with Jacob, appeared but to ſtruggle with the corruption of the fleſh. When that corruption had vitiated "every imagination of the "thoughts of man's heart to only evil con-"tinually," no inconſiderable effect of the partial communications which continued the ſhadow of that glory which dwelt in Paradiſe, was diſplayed in the tranſmitted luſtre of the patriarchal line; and the vigour of that faith is not lightly to be eſteemed, which embraced with full aſſurance promiſes "ſeen "afar off," and looked to an heavenly recompenſe; which in ſucceſſive inſtances obtained a teſtimony of praiſe from God, and is celebrated by the Apoſtle, as exhibiting examples worthy to be reverenced of the Chriſtian world.

Revelation obtained its firſt object, as it marked out the foundations of that œconomy by which the Almighty vindicated his claim to human worſhip, and depoſed the platform of

of his Church, by the ſeparation of his ſervants; who, as they multiplied into "a na-"tion of Prieſts," preſerved at leaſt with fidelity the records of his inſtructions, and illuſtrated the excellency of his judgments.

The prophets and holy men, who were employed to cenſure with indignant zeal the effects of the corruption which counteracted the force of their teaching, painted in ſtrong and heightened colours the obſtinacy of that evil, which could reject the precepts of inſpired wiſdom; and aggravated in ſtriking repreſentation, manners which accorded but ſeldom with the requiſitions of a Divine law. In condemning however the perverſeneſs which inclined to ſurrounding idolatry, they have ſtill preſerved the memory of a city once filled with righteouſneſs *, and of reſerved thouſands, whoſe lips in flagitious times had been employed only to utter the praiſes of exalted piety to the true God †. Their exhortations and accompliſhed threats finally effected a rejection of Pagan errors, and a devotion to God's excluſive ſervice ‡; and

* Iſaiah, chap. i. ver. 21.

† 1 Kings, chap. xix. ver. 18.

‡ The Jews, after the Babyloniſh Captivity, were thoroughly weaned from idolatry; and when they adhered to the

and the diſpenſation which they imparted, while it ſerved to convince mankind of ſin, and ſketched out the figures of a more perfect ſcheme, had fulfilled its appointed purpoſe, when it ratified the pretenſions of that Redeemer who was to "bruiſe the head" of the tempter to evil, and finally to defeat every effort of his malevolence.

After the preparatory inſtitutions of the Hebrew covenant had vaniſhed in the perfection of the Goſpel, the genuine effects of religion were diſplayed in the entire and admirable renovation of the human character, through ſucceſſive generations baptized into a Church every where unfolding its everlaſting doors, and receiving its mem-

precepts of religion, they exhibited virtues which the moſt contemptuous hatred unwillingly admitted. Tacitus, who, in treating of the Jews, betrays certainly a great want of candour and information, ſpeaks of the "determined faith and ready com- "paſſion for each other," for which, notwithſtanding their hatred to the reſt of mankind, they were diſtinguiſhed. Gibbon repreſents the ſtatement of the Hiſtorian as too favourable; but from his own ſeeming cenſure we collect that "neither the "violence of Antiochus, nor the arts of Herod, nor the exam- "ple of the circumjacent nations, could ever perſuade the "Jews to aſſociate with the inſtitutions of Moſes the ele- "gant mythology of the Greeks." See Decline and Fall, ch. xv. The Moſaic diſpenſation abounded with precepts of benevolence; and the conduct of the Jews was not defective in charity to ſtrangers. A deſire to ſhun the contagious influence of idolatry, was the principal and meritorious cauſe of their averſion to other nations. See Lightfoot on Acts x. ver. 28.

bers

bers from a converted and repentant world. The hatred incurred by thoſe, whoſe righteouſneſs upbraided the lovers of darkneſs, deprived the followers of the Croſs of many teſtimonies which they merited *. Still, however, from unſuſpected and reluctant evidence †, it is unqueſtionable, that the moſt ſublime and irreproachable conduct was manifeſted by the early Diſciples and Confeſſors of the Chriſtian faith; whoſe lives were conſecrated to the ſervice, and whoſe deaths bare atteſtation to the integrity of virtues, which expiring Paganiſm vainly laboured to adopt and emulate ‡.

Fatal as was the change effected in ſucceeding times of ignorance and of violence, the ſalutary influence of religion was diffuſed wherever its character was underſtood. Thoſe who profited moſt by its laws were not however diſtinguiſhed in the rude conteſts and tumultuous ſcenes which were expoſed to public regard, and became the ſubject of

* O vetuſtatis ſilentis obſoleta oblivio!
Invidentur iſta nobis, fama et ipſa extinguitur.
Chartulas blaſphemus olim nam ſatelles abſtulit.
Prudent. Hymn. i. v. 73, 75.

† Plin. l. x. Ep. 97. Julian. Epiſt. 49. Lucian. in Peregrin.

‡ Vid. Julian. Epiſt. Gregor. Nazian. Orat. iii. p. 101.

the hiſtorian's pen. The effects of Chriſtianity are inſcribed on humble monuments. Its unaſſuming virtues have been forgotten, where the miſconduct of its profeſſors has been regiſtered with reſentful memory. Its operation is to be experienced, and not proclaimed; is to be perceived in the direction of well-regulated affections; in cheerful fortitude; in the humility of ſelf-abaſement; in the unwritten deeds of ſecret charity; in the animation of holy ſentiment; in the ſpeculations of benevolence which hath not tranſpired *.

Whatever of religious control ſoftened the force of paſſions which raged in theſe unhappy times; whatever of true wiſdom is to be found in the writings, or was tranſcribed in the lives of thoſe who bewailed the prevailing evils, Chriſtianity may juſtly claim; and the zeal for truth evinced by

* "Chriſtianity," ſays Jortin, after a ſtrong and rapid ſtatement of its defaced character "at the very worſt, and "under the worſt of times, could not loſe all her excellence, "and undoubtedly produced good effects in thouſands and "ten thouſands, whoſe lives are not recorded in Eccleſiaſtical "Hiſtory; which, like other hiſtory, is for the moſt part a "regiſter of the vices, the follies, and the quarrels of thoſe "who made a figure and a noiſe in the world." Remarks on Eccleſ. Hiſt. Vol. II. p. 338. Newton on the Prophecies, Vol. III. p. 147—197.

thoſe

thoſe who withdrew and ſeparated themſelves from the deluſions of the Romiſh faith, and were expoſed to the intolerant bigotry of its reſentment, muſt alſo be attributed to the ſuggeſtions of revealed knowledge. Such were earneſt in their repreſentations for reform, in proportion to their acquaintance with the Scriptures, bearing teſtimony to the truth, as witneſſes and diſciples of the faith, which fled from perſecution to places prepared of God *.

As thoſe however who ſhould judge of the importance of that glorious luminary, which with apparent majeſty ruleth over the natural world, from the tranſient diſplay of its cheerful beams; without conſidering it as the centre of a ſtupendous ſyſtem; the perennial ſource of light; the operating and energetic power that affects and modifies every part of creation; ſo ſhould we form a very

* Revelations ch. xii. The following Provençal verſes, compoſed on the Vaudois in 1100, ſhew their reputation for ſtrictneſs of manners:

Que non volia maudir, ne jura, ne mentir,
N'occir, ne avoutrar, ne prenne de altrui,
Ne s'avengear deli ſuo enemi,
Los diſon qu' es Vaudes & los feſon morir.
Voltaire, Hiſt. Univer. ch. 69.

inadequate and partial eſtimate of the effects of Chriſtianity, if, confining our admiration to the viſible burſt of its rays, we ſhould not reflect on its power over every dependency of the intellectual world; its efficacy pervading every ſecret vein of thought; its inſtructions meliorating, often by imperceptible degrees, the laws, literature, and manners of every country, which in the revolution of ſucceſſive ages it hath viſited.

The communication of a perfect law, which every mind, in proportion as it is enlarged, venerates with increaſing admiration and improvement, could not be promulgated but with beneficial effect to the world. To enquire wherefore its glory hath not been diſplayed with univerſal and equal luſtre; why either it hath not riſen on ſome lands, or hath ſet with too ſpeedy decline, is to enquire wherefore God hath harmonized the ſpiritual as well as the natural world with gradations of poſition, with unequal extent of favour. That where it hath ſpread it hath imparted bleſſings, cannot be diſputed. The paſſions and perverſe inclinations of men may often hurry them to act inconſiſtently with the ſuggeſtions of their own conſcience;

but

but in general the propriety of their conduct muſt depend upon the integrity of the principles implanted in their minds.

We are not ſurpriſed that the Heathens ſhould have "committed all iniquity with "greedineſs," when we reflect on the ſprings and motives of their actions. Their temples were the ſanctuaries of impurity *: whatever of elegance was diffuſed over the fanciful objects of their mythology, or their inſtitutions

* The licentious character of the Heathen theology has been expoſed till we are weary of the theme; and more deteſtable features of Paganiſm might eaſily be produced. Its worſhip was often ſanguinary, and its deities are not too ſtrongly deſcribed by Clemens Alexandrinus, as μισανθρωποι Δαιμονες, και ουχι μονον επιχαιροντες τη φρενοβλαβεια των ανθρωπων, προσδε και ανθρωποκτονιας απολαυονλες. Of the ſavage nature of the Gentile ſuperſtitions he produces many ſtriking proofs, deſcribing its deities as viſiting nations and cities like peſtilences. Vide Cohort. ad Gent. § 3. p. 36. Edit. Potter. Vid. alſo Juſtin Martyr, Theophilus, and Lactantius de falſa Religione. Thoſe who conſider how general and deep were the impreſſions of Polytheiſm, and how much the Chriſtians were condemned for deſpiſing them, will not think, with Gibbon, that the Fathers "expoſed its extravagance with ſuper-"fluous wit and eloquence." The evidence from prophecy and miracles, now ſo juſtly inſiſted on, would have been urged with leſs effect, while falſe prophecies and miracles, and deſcending deities, were univerſally believed; and it was neceſſary to prepare the mind for the pure and ſublime morality of the Goſpel, by firſt awakening it to the falſe glare and the abſurdities of exiſting ſuperſtition. The Hiſtorian himſelf ſeems often to have been reconciled to the extravagance of Polytheiſm, and inclined to ſoften down its inſtitutions into harmleſs rites; and many other writers, with a refinement of philoſophy,

tutions and ceremonies of religious celebration, ſerved but to diſguiſe their real character with luxuriant and ſeductive embelliſhment; and thoſe only could advance towards the perfection of a moral life, who, rejecting the vicious fables of their religion, exerted their induſtry in retracing the native impreſſions of the human mind; or in collecting ſuch traditionary fragments of revealed knowledge, as were "graven "with an iron pen" on the rocks and rude ſtructures of antiquity, and diſperſed in ſcattered leaves by exiles from that land, in which its inſtructions were recorded. As however they too generally reaſoned from the illuſive ſpeculations of human fancy, limited to the contemplation of the human character, they ſyſtematically erred from falſe principles; and thoſe whoſe noble minds revolted from ſurrounding ſcenes, but cheriſhed with pride, and recommended with eloquence, artificial ſyſtems, grounded on human motives, and productive of erroneous conduct.

ſophy, and an affectation of claſſical knowledge, have endeavoured to extract from its groſſeſt imagery a ſecret wiſdom; ſearching amidſt the impurities of licentious fable for the moſt ſublime principles of religion, by a chemiſtry which might be neceſſary indeed for the enlightened part of mankind, ſhould the infatuation of a relapſe into Pagan worſhip prevail beyond the boundaries of that unhappy country which has been deluded to reſtore it.

The

The excellency of Revealed Religion, not only as it is a ſyſtem in which the Divine attributes, and the glories of a ſpiritual world are gradually diſcloſed; but as it inculcates principles of religious and moral conduct, univerſal in their application, and unimpeachable in their character, is eſtabliſhed with undiſputed evidence. Its efficacy to promote the welfare and happineſs of mankind, has been controlled and ſuppreſſed by the obſtinacy of that repugnance, which, from its affection to evil, has rejected its guidance*; and it has been ſtill more fatally impeded by the perverſeneſs of that iniquity, which hath mutilated its inſtructions.

With the evil paſſions of thoſe who have refuſed to act under the direction of religion, and concealed themſelves with conſcious guilt from God's preſence; however they may have lived in periods and countries in which it was promulgated, we have no concern in a vindication of its tendency, ſince it never can be repreſented as eſſential to Revelation,

* Αδυναλον ην το αγαθον ενθαδε καθαρευειν της κακιας ὁ γαρ κοσμος πληρωμα εϛι της κακιας. The exiſtence of evil was obvious; the cauſe unknown to the Heathen World. Παντων δε μεγιϛον κακον ανθρωποις τοις πολλοις ενφυτον εν ταις ψυχαις εϛιν. Plat. de Legibus. l. v.

that

that it ſhould impoſe conviction, and compel obedience.

The depravity however, which hath rejected Religion, hath often borne, as the Devils, who acknowledged Chriſt, an unwilling teſtimony to its worth; fulfilling the prophecies which it unfolds, and affording a ſtriking contraſt to its character, in the unhappy objects, whom it hath haraſſed. When the Iſraelites became children of tranſgreſſion, and inflamed themſelves with idols under every green tree, it was to ſlay the children in the valleys, under the clifts of the rocks *. And it would be but too obvious to point out an aggravated counterpart of the effects of apoſtaſy in modern times. Not the pride which hath rejected Religion; not the defection which hath renounced its laws: but that pretended attachment which hath changed its principles, and kindled "a ſtrange fire on God's altar," hath effected the greateſt injury; here hath the malignant ſpirit diſplayed his moſt fatal enmity, and bruiſed with too ſucceſsful ſubtilty the heel of the Meſſiah.

That ſpeculative and deluſive fancies ſhould have been framed on that general

* Iſaiah, chap. lvii. ver. 4, 5. See alſo 2 Kings, chap. xvi. ver. 3. Jeremiah, chap. xxxii. ver. 35.

perſuaſion,

perſuaſion, which reſulted from a view of the external evidence of a Supreme Being, was but an illuſtration of the vanity of human reaſon, left to build its own ſchemes, and to expoſe its own futility. But, that any preſumptuous folly, or corrupt deſign, ſhould dare to change the poſitive laws of acknowledged revelation, indicated the moſt prodigious exceſs of human depravity.

While the glory of God's preſence was continued among the Iſraelites, and ſucceſſive prophets watched over the fidelity of the revelations which they had communicated, it was difficult, if not impoſſible, for any falſification of the divine laws to paſs undetected; and the reverence which the people invariably entertained for the ſacred writings, ſecured their obſervance of the Moſaic precept, of not "adding unto the word, or of diminiſhing from it *." The prophet, who uttered even the deceptions of his heart, was puniſhed for the iniquity, to which he was acceſſary †; and when the roll of God's wrath was burnt, by the daring impiety of the op-

* Deut. chap. iv. ver. 2. Joſeph. cont. Apion. l. i.
† Ezek. ch. xiv. ver. 8, 9.

preſſor,

preſſor, whoſe ears were offended at its threats, the delegated miniſters of the Almighty were commanded to take again another roll, and to renew the denunciations of the divine reſentment. Hence it was, that though "Judea, the place of God's throne, and the "place of the ſoles of his feet, where he "dwelt in the midſt of the children of Iſ-"rael," was "defiled by the carcaſes of "their kings*, in their high places, and in "their ſetting of their threſhold by his threſh-"old, and their poſts by his poſts," it was not till long after the ſacred line was cloſed, that we hear of the word of God being made of none effect, by the "tradition of "the Elders," and of "the teaching for doc-"trines the commandments of men."

The Hebrew Prieſthood, ſupported with ample and defined maintenance by the liberal proviſion of the law, had no intereſt to pervert its precepts, with deſign to profit by the deluſion of their nation. The Scribes and the Phariſees, who laboured for pre-eminence by the affectation of ſuperior ſanctity, encum-

* Ezekiel, chap. xliii. ver. 7. Kings or Idols. See Levit. ch. xxvi. ver. 30. Jeremiah, chap. xvi. ver. 18.

bered

bered the external ſervice enjoined by the written law with traditionary ceremonies and oral precept: ſolicitous to conceal the inward corruption of their heart, they impreſſed with the ſeal of ſanctity the formal works of outward obſervance; interpreted the Scriptures by fallacious expoſition; evaded its moral obligations by the pretence of ſacred reſtrictions, and diſtorted its doctrines in accommodation to worldly intereſt. Objects of Chriſt's keeneſt reproaches, they were expoſed with detected pollution to the abhorrence of mankind, and ſtand recorded for a depravity, darkened with the deepeſt ſhades of hypocriſy and guilt.

Of the rejection of the Goſpel by the unworthy, Chriſt foretold the certainty—of the corruption alſo of the righteous principle—of the falſe teachers who ſhould ariſe, with prophetic aſſurance he ſpake. With preciſe declaration likewiſe did thoſe whom he had inſtructed foretel of the hereſies which the fleſh would generate *. With minute delineation did they deſcribe the character of that "man of ſin," or "myſtery of iniquity,"

* 1 Cor. chap. xi. ver. 19. Gal. chap. v. ver. 20. 2 Pet. chap. ii. ver. 1.

which

which already worked in the time of the Apoſtles; prefigured as oppoſing and exalting himſelf above all that is called God, or that is worſhipped *.

In conſidering the effect of thoſe errors, which, though drawn from the ſources of human invention, were permitted gradually to intermingle with the doctrines of Revelation, we perceive the moſt fatal completion of the divine predictions; and mark with regret the change of that law, which went forth with ſalutary publication to the world. That the ſtone, which many builders, to their own confuſion, rejected, ſhould become a rock of offence to thoſe alſo who profeſſed to raiſe their fabric on its foundations, is a ſubject of fearful reflection. The imagination lingers on the theme with a ſorrow proportioned to the folly and perverſeneſs of mankind, anxious fully to aſcertain the cauſes of a deluſion ſo injurious to the eſſential intereſts of Chriſtianity.

The retroſpect of error is ſerviceable, where it tends to vindicate the leſſons of wiſdom. The vicious inclinations of the human heart furniſh the ſure and unceaſing incitements to

* 2 Theſſal. chap. ii. ver. 4—10.

evil,

evil, and the regulations concerted by experience ſhould be reſpected as bulwarks againſt their operation. Reaſon and reflection enrol their maxims with difficulty. Till propitious occaſions conſpire to favour their exhortations, they may repine in ſilence, or utter their unheeded counſels. To undervalue their decrees, once confirmed, beſpeaks infatuation, or a malignant purpoſe.

In commendation of the moſt important meaſures which perhaps ever were adopted in conformity to the deſign of religion, it is purpoſed, in the Diſcourſes which will be delivered under the preſent appointment, to deſcribe the leading principles which were eſtabliſhed by the Reformation in this country; calculated as they were to ſecure the eſſential integrity of Chriſtianity, by ſhielding it from the baneful influence of thoſe paſſions, which ever will continue to breathe rebellious hoſtility to its precepts.

A diſcuſſion which will exhibit, in a connected view, the chief particulars depoſed by Chriſt as to the nature of his kingdom; the authority delegated to his Miniſters; and the promiſes imparted with regard to the ſuperintendance of his Church, may contribute to demonſtrate the fidelity with which his re-

vealed laws were reſpected, on the providential reſtoration of their written inſtruction to this country.

If, in order to illuſtrate the importance of the principles by which the regularity and beauty of true religion were renewed at this auſpicious period, we are compelled with unſatisfactory reflection, to advert to thoſe more exorbitant and portentous wanderings of human error, which in the contemplation of a re-eſtabliſhed ſyſtem we lament, it may tend to confirm our admiration of thoſe efforts, which are beſt appreciated by the evils which they removed. In directing our attention to ſuch deflections from the appointed courſes of obedience, we are not to forget that they were attained often by inſenſible decline and ſucceſſive gradations. The imagination, hurried on by the force of religious ardour, firſt miſled the judgment, drawing it to devious flights * and eccentric emulation †. The enthuſiaſm excited by religious objects was calculated to inflame the fancy; and in the exceſſes of virtue we find ſomewhat to pardon

* See the account of the riſe of the Nicolaitans in Euſebius's Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iii. c. 29.

† See the deſcription of the Therapeutæ in Euſeb. lib. ii. c. 17.

at

at leaſt, if not to admire. In the zeal which ambitiouſly courted martyrdom, and in the barren toil and auſterities of devotion, we diſcover only an extravagance reſulting from ſincere impreſſions.

The error, in many inſtances of perverted piety, grew out of the becoming practice. It was the convention of charity, and the holy oblation, that led to the perverſion of the ſolemnities of the Euchariſt *. It was at the ſepulchre of thoſe who had laid down their lives in Chriſt's cauſe, that fervent veneration hallowed the reſcued relic †, and preſented the benevolent offerings in honour of the dead, which ſuperſtition continued with conceit of propitiatory atonement for ſin ‡. The taper, conſecrated by folly, was firſt lighted to illumine the gloomy retreats, in which the ſacred vigils were ſhrouded from inſult

* The gratulatory offerings of the early Chriſtians at the communion of the feaſts of charity, ſeem to have firſt occaſioned the Euchariſt to be conſidered as a ſacrifice. The Gentile converts contributed to increaſe miſconceptions, by retaining their accuſtomed terms of ſacrifice and altar, and applying them to the elements and the table. Vide Irenæ. l. iv. c. 32. Cyprian. de Oper. & Eleemoſ. &c.

† Baſil in 40 Martyr.

‡ In the ſecond century offerings for the dead, in reſemblance of a Pagan cuſtom, were preſented to the Church and the poor at the expiration of the year, with commemoration of

inſult and perſecution *. Penance was ſet up as a ſacramental ordinance †, upon the abuſe of penitential diſcipline; and the elevation and the proceſſion of the Hoſt originated—the one in harmleſs expreſſion of Chriſt's exaltation on the croſs—the other in the charitable conveyance of the ſacred elements to the ſick.

Theſe and ſimilar vanities may be ultimately traced to a juſt principle, ſtriking its deep root, and entwining its fibres with the beſt affections of the human heart. It is the redundancy of the branch which ſpreadeth the ſhade, caſting on the deluded votaries of an obſtructed faith the diſcredit only of unconſcious error, which ſtill excites, wherever it exiſts, a commiſeration, mingled with reſentment againſt the evil counſellors, who withhold the friendly hand of reform.

the virtues of the defunct, and as expreſſive of their charitable character. Cyprian. l. iii. Epiſt. 15, 16. Auguſt. Epiſt. 64. Origen, l. iii. in Job. & Tertull. de Monogamia. So alſo interceſſions made by confeſſors, ſuffering in priſon for their adherence to the faith, in favour of penitents anxious for reconciliation with the Church, laid the foundation of the errors which afterwards prevailed concerning interceſſions of Saints, and the imaginary efficacy of their prayers after death; not very different from that attributed to the influence of the dæmons of antiquity. See Plutarch. de Defect. Oracul.

* Euſeb. de Vit. Conſtant. l. iv. Epiphan. l. iii.

† The Council of Trent attributes the ſacramental efficacy of penance to abſolution. §. 14. c. 3.

It

It were foreign to our deſign to mark out the varied productions and progreſſive ſhootings of human error, grafted on a ſtrong and vigorous ſtock, ſince, unhappily for mankind, that final corruption, which, at the revival of ſcience, excited an irreſiſtible neceſſity of change, had totally choaked up and deſtroyed the righteous principle. Confining our attention to the evils as they then exiſted, we ſhall endeavour only to repreſent, by a ſtatement of the laws of Chriſt, as firſt eſtabliſhed, how groſsly they were violated, how faithfully they were reſtored; to point out with what admirable prudence ſuperſtition was diſcarded, without prejudice to religion; and at a time that indignation was rouſed by every ſenſe of injury, the diſcipline, doctrine, and inſtitutions of a true Church were reſcued with cautious and reverential piety from the accumulated maſs of corruption which had nearly overwhelmed them.

In inviting attention to ſubjects often produced under every form, it would be conſiſtent with apprehenſions which muſt ariſe, to deprecate the diſtaſte of learned minds, accuſtomed to diſquiſitions of remote and difficult diſcuſſion; but at a time when the

luſt for novel ſpeculation hath been often known to ſeduce the mind to a forgetfulneſs of the moſt important truths, it has been judged agreeable to the deſign of this appointment, as well as level with the purſuits of unambitious induſtry, to review the plain and obvious principles upon which the moſt eſſential intereſts of religion depend.

In the conſideration of a theory of general importance, it may be gratifying here to reflect, with peculiar intereſt, that the firſt diſtinguiſhed aſſertor of religious freedom diſcovered and taught its earlieſt truths at this Univerſity* ; that his writings awakened the ſpirit of reformation in other countries †; and that, when the triumphant cauſe experienced

* Wickliffé, who was educated at Oxford, preached his doctrines there with ſuch ſucceſs, that, on the appearance of the Pope's Bull againſt him, the Univerſity deliberated whether or not it ſhould be received; and his followers increaſed prodigiouſly, and were diſtinguiſhed by their dreſs. See Wood's Hiſt. & Antiquit. l. i. p. 186, 191, & paſſim. Walſingham, p. 201. and Baker's Chronicle, p. 160. Jerome of Prague profeſſed at the Council of Conſtance to have ſeen a teſtimonial of the Univerſity in favour of Wickliffe. Probably that publiſhed in 1406.

† John Huſs derived his principles of the Reformation from the works of Wickliffe, furniſhed to him by a Bohemian nobleman, who had reſided at Oxford; and Jerome of Prague, who had viſited Oxford, drew his ideas of the Reform from the ſame ſource. See Gilpin's Lives of the Reformers.

a temporary

a temporary check in theſe realms, its moſt eminent advocates evinced in this place the efficacy of the faith, and confirmed its impreſſion by ſealing with expiring teſtimony the confeſſions of martyrdom in its praiſe; kindling, as the conviction of undaunted confidence foretold, a light not likely to be extinguiſhed.

In illuſtration of the real character of Chriſtianity, by a deſcription of its reſtored ſincerity, it is expedient to confine our attention to its features, as exhibited in this country. If, without adverting to the extravagance of ſubordinate ſects, we contemplate the general progreſs of the Reformation on the Continent, we are compelled by impartial reflection to regret, that the impetuous reſentment which ſwelled againſt oppoſing difficulties, and which was perhaps neceſſary to give energy to the firſt impulſe of reaſon, often hurried it to a precipitation prejudicial to the intereſts of truth. The enthuſiaſm excited at the commencement of an arduous work, operating on the ſentiments and prejudices of individual leaders, occaſioned the intermixture of ſome blemiſhes, which were ſuffered to disfigure even the permanent inſtitutions of the ſeveral Churches which they

eſtabliſhed *. This remark is adopted, not with inſidious deſign to leſſen the pretenſions of other departments of the Univerſal Church, but to point out the exiſtence of thoſe favourable circumſtances, which, under Divine Providence, conſpired to the eſtabliſhment of pure and apoſtolic arrangements in our own country.

The enlightened men, whoſe judicious counſels contributed to the advancement of the Reformation as here perfected, could not behold the agitation and ſevere conteſts which prevailed on the Continent, without remarking the inconveniences which tempeſtuous times and haſty violence had occaſioned. Removed

* The vehement and uncharitable ſpirit of Luther, the yielding ſoftneſs of Melancthon, and the rude and overbearing harſhneſs of Calvin, ſhould be forgotten, as the defects of illuſtrious characters. We cannot however but lament the errors which were admitted into the confeſſions of their faith. In the moſt authentic edition of the Defence of the Confeſſion of Augſburg, which was drawn up by Melancthon, and which is conſidered by Moſheim as a part of the chief and moſt reſpectable formulary of the Lutheran Church, a true tranſmutation of the bread into the fleſh was admitted, though left out of the ſubſequent editions. See Hoſpinian. Hiſt. Sacram. pars poſt. p. 199. In the form of concord afterwards drawn up, in the ſevere tenets and intolerant ſpirit of the more rigid Lutherans, and adopted by the majority of the Lutheran Churches, the ubiquity and real manducation of the fleſh and blood were maintained, and perſecution in conſequence excited againſt the favourers of Calviniſm, by whom the form was

moved at a diſtance from the contending parties, they were enabled to profit by the miſtakes, as well of thoſe who clamoured with too eager zeal for innovation, as of thoſe who ſtruggled with tenacious prejudice for inveterate corruptions. Not dazzled by the glare of new opinions, they perceived gradually and diſtinctly the objects to which reformation ſhould be directed, and accurately diſcriminated between the original inſtitution and the ſpurious fancy, the primitive doctrine and the practical abuſe. Contemplating the vaſt pillars on which the Romiſh Church was ſupported, and aware that their Sovereign had been the applauded defender of its faith, the friends of truth were not hurried on by any eager expectation of the immediate

was generally and vigorouſly oppoſed. Vide Hoſpinian. Concord. Diſcors. The defective morality, and the undefined and imperfect diſcipline of the Lutheran Church, haſtily ſettled in days of controverſy and diſſenſion, and the doctrines of abſolute Predeſtination and controlling Grace, ſo peremptorily aſſerted by Luther, though diſclaimed by moſt of his followers, are the ſubjects of regret to its friends. The intolerance, the Eraſtian principles, and the notion of the Euchariſt, as merely a commemorative rite of Zuingle, cannot but be condemned. The extravagance of Caroleſtadt produced unhappy effects. In Denmark the civil conſtitution was deranged, by the violent abolition of the epiſcopal power. The phrenzies of the Antinomians and Anabaptiſts were extravagantly pernicious. The opinions of the Calviniſts concerning abſolute decrees, perſeverance and juſtification, and civil and eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, are to be lamented as permanent blemiſhes of their Church.

deſtruction

deſtruction of that grievous dominion which had been ſet up, and perceived that the widely extended influence of a confirmed power could be undermined only by the effect of that "ſtill ſmall voice" which ſhould announce the Divine preſence; the preparation of whoſe approach had already "rent the "mountains *."

The firſt meaſures of reform, as they originated with the regular powers of government, and not with adventurous individuals, were tempered with diſcretion, and peaceably modified and ſecured with lawful proviſions. The ſupremacy of the Papal uſurpation was abjured, not only without offence, but in ſtrict obedience to the civil and ſpiritual authorities. No rude defiance of legitimate claims, no wild contempt of lawful government, no undue conceſſions to auxiliary powers † were neceſſary for the furtherance of the projected plan. Not the inflamed paſſions, but the enlightened underſtanding was to be addreſſed; not the fancy, but the

* 1 Kings ch. xix. ver. 12.

† Voltaire aſſerts, that Luther, with a ſmall Council of Reformers, indulged Philip, the Landgrave of Heſſe-Caſſel, in a permiſſion of bigamy. See Hiſt. Univerſ. ch. 108. The authority is queſtionable.

judgment

judgment was to be engaged in the advancement of a reaſonable and well-deliberated cauſe.

Never perhaps could there be a time and circumſtances more favourable to the ſlow and reſtrained adoption of juſt principles and moderate decrees than this period, when private and political intereſts * conſpired to promote the qualified acceptance of doctrines, prevailing by their intrinſic evidence, and ratified on that baſis of truth on which alone they could reſt; while oppoſite parties pleaded with diſcordant zeal againſt their eſtabliſhment. Our Church therefore was confirmed on the moſt unexceptionable ground, and was demonſtrated, not alone by the eloquent repreſentations of its advocates, but by the ingenuous tribute of foreign applauſe †, to be the glory and bright ornament of the Reformation.

* Henry, by entering into a controverſy with Luther, had drawn the attention of his ſubjects to the diſputed points. During the vexatious delay of his application at Rome, he encouraged a diſcuſſion of the Papal claims, and endeavoured to intimidate the Pope, by moderating, and in part ſuſpending, the perſecution of reputed hereſy. Ann Boleyn, his favourite Queen, was naturally provoked to ſhew her reſentment to the power which had obſtructed her advancement, and was by principle inclined to favour the Reformers.

† Grotius Epiſt. ad Boet.

In

In the deſcription of a work, great and extenſive as was the Reformation, advancing by progreſſive ſtages of improvement, it is not neceſſary to notice every ſucceſſive change, or to advert to every effort. Sufficient is it, if, by a repreſentation of its permanent inſtitutions, its general conſiſtency with reaſon and religion, and the ſolidity of its principal foundations, be ſhewn. As, by the magnitude of its object, and the extent of its deſigns, it involved the various intereſts, and engaged the collected paſſions of the nation in its progreſs, it could not but occaſionally exhibit characters of exceptionable caſt. Intereſted men often profeſſed a popular cauſe, and debaſed it with prejudicial and unworthy councils. The detected error poſſeſſed a lingering influence; the ancient claim was reluctantly reſigned. Such were the blemiſhes of a ſcheme of human conduct; defects inconſiſtent with the general ſpirit of the Reformation, and leaving but few ſtains. The juſt principle, though obſtructed in its growth, was finally matured. The ſincere doctrine, though induſtriouſly clouded, was at length cleared. The noble circle of the Confeſſors and diſtinguiſhed leaders of the reformed faith, rejects the deformity

formity of theſe ſuſpected characters, who were attracted by baſe allurements to eſpouſe the cauſe. The integrity of the perfected eſtabliſhment diſclaims the diſcredit of thoſe errors, which were with difficulty removed from the fabric with which they had been long incorporated. In the completion of the work there is much indeed to excite our reverence. Its importance can be eſtimated by thoſe only who obſerve its extenſive influence over every department of life; who conſider it as affecting every intereſt of the community, domeſtic and ſocial; as contributing to the advancement of liberal enquiry, moral improvement, civil and religious freedom.

The eſtabliſhment of juſt principles muſt ever be conſidered as the baſis of public and private happineſs. "All the earth calleth "upon the truth, and the heaven bleſſeth it: "it endureth, and is always ſtrong. With "her there is no accepting of perſons or re- "wards; but ſhe doeth the things that are "juſt, and refraineth from all unjuſt and "wicked things; and all men do well like "of her works, and ſhe is the ſtrength, "kingdom, power, and majeſty of all "ages *." Its permanent characters are re-

* Eſdras, chap. iv. ver. 16.

corded

corded only in the pages of revelation, ſteady and unchangeable, while the theories of fancy and the deluſions of falſehood riſe but to diſperſe, flouriſh, and are forgotten with the vanity which gave them birth.

The doctrines of Chriſtianity are never merely ſpeculative; nor is any particular diſcloſed in Scripture, ſolely to play on the imagination. Every communication is intended to fix the mind to ſome ſolid object that calls for reverence, and intimates the precepts of practical obſervance *. Hence do moral virtues emanate from pure faith, with a luſtre and conſiſtency dependent on the vigour of its attention, and the ſtrength of its conviction.

The broad features of human corruption, exhibiting ſtriking though varied aſpects in every age, characteriſe ſo ſtrongly each period, that religion can no where diſplay its predominant and unclouded character; and, in contraſting the great outlines of compariſon between different ages, we are often

* "Opinions," ſays Biſhop Warburton, "concerning the "nature of the Deity, ſo entirely influence all religious prac- "tice, that this invariably takes its character from theſe, and "becomes more or leſs perfect, as theſe are nearer to or far- "ther removed from the truth." See Alliance, p. 60. and Plato's Eutych.

unable

unable to aſcertain the relative ſuperiority. If, however, by a comprehenſive eſtimate of the complicated evils which have counteracted the operation of Chriſtianity, we would aſcertain its full effects, it would undoubtedly be found that they have been ſalutary and important in proportion to the fidelity with which its precepts have been communicated and enforced: not only in great and prominent diſplay, but in general and extenſive influence, among all claſſes and deſcriptions of men, whether profeſſing reverence for inſtructions of revelation, or unconſciouſly adopting what they affect to diſregard or oppoſe *: improved in numberleſs circumſtances, which give perhaps no glow to the colourings of hiſtory, though they certainly brighten the views of the times concerned, and contribute to diſperſe the prejudicial in-

* The members of the Romiſh Church have undoubtedly perceived the folly of many doctrines profeſſed in their Creed; but as thoſe doctrines are connected with eſtabliſhed inſtitutions, favourable circumſtances muſt contribute to their removal. At preſent their champions ſhelter themſelves under qualifications and ſubterfuge, diſavowed by poſitive practice and authoritative declarations. Thoſe who, offended by the corruptions of ſuperſtition, have been led to overlook the teſtimonies, and undervalue the importance of religion, have often borrowed its precepts and adopted its principles.

fluence

fluence of that evil, which lours with eternal enmity to the welfare of mankind.

To eſtimate the importance of Chriſtianity contraſted with ſuperſtition—with morality deſtitute of vital faith—with honour capricious and variable—with philoſophy vague and fallacious, it is expedient not ſo much to contraſt different ages, however on ſuch compariſon its glorious character might be illuſtrated, but rather to trace the different advances made under the guidance of human wiſdom and divine inſtruction through ſimilar circumſtances; in co-exiſting ſtates, with equal improvement in ſcience, and correſpondent refinement in manners; in different claſſes of men in the ſame ſociety; in the circles of individual example.

The light of ſcience and the progreſs of enquiry have at all times been favourable to Chriſtianity; and there is a degree of civilization congenial to its ſpirit, and friendly, if not neceſſary, to its ſucceſs: but beyond this there is alſo a corruption in manners, and a conceit of knowledge injurious to its intereſts, and even proudly contemptuous of its inſtructions. "The opportunity of leiſure" is eſſential to the attainment of information, and facilitates the deduction of the teſtimonies

nies of truth; but the habits of indolence, and the diſſipation of thoughtleſs vacuity, are calculated only to enfeeble and to debaſe the mind. The ſphere of enquiry is extended, and the collections of general induſtry compared, as intercourſe between different countries is enlarged; but the proſperity of ſtates has too often proved ruinous to the integrity of their character; and the deductions of learning and ſober enquiry are not ſeldom overlooked by the careleſs inſenſibility of the general ranks, or the confident vanity of thoſe who deem themſelves enlightened by the diffuſion of a ſuperficial knowledge.

The exiſting ſtate of life and manners preſents abundant illuſtration of the truth of theſe remarks. At no period, ſince the right of an uncontrolled freedom of judgment has been aſſerted, have ſuch bold and extravagant opinions been propagated to perplex mankind; or the general claſſes of ſociety been more miſled by men, whoſe vivacity of genius and powers of intellect are employed only on thoſe looſe principles and inaccurate notions, which circulate in popular diſcuſſion. The reputation for talents, where no ſolid information exiſts, is often ſupported but by

confident aſſertion and fanciful argument. Hence it ſo frequently happens, that men, who have proſecuted none of thoſe ſtudies which are neceſſary to develope, even the ſcheme of the external evidence of Chriſtianity, preſume, with deſultory remark and preſumptuous deciſion, to determine on its proofs. They bring forward perhaps ſome ſolitary particular of ſceptical invention, or ſome trivial circumſtance of ſubordinate concern, to invalidate the connected and conſiſtent teſtimonies of hiſtory. They produce ſome precarious concluſion from philoſophical ſtatements, haſtily framed and partially conſidered, to impeach the fidelity of records, which thoſe of the moſt enlarged minds, who have reaſoned from comprehenſive reſearch, and from ſuch ſtores of acquired knowledge, as amidſt the habits of modern life are rarely, if ever, attained, have atteſted with fulleſt conviction; ſuch having learnt by profound enquiry and ſedate reflection to think diffidently of their own wiſdom, and to reſtrict their reaſon to objects within the ſcope of its faculties and the limits of its attainments. By theſe means, is the authority of religion invalidated on thoſe who are unaccuſtomed to contemplate the concentered rays of evidence before

which

which the objections that occupy the uninſtructed mind fade and diſappear; and hence is the faith which has no ſolid reliance ſurrendered to vague declamation; or diſtracted with doubts which it cannot diſperſe, and difficulties which it cannot ſolve.

The influence of ſuch aſcendency is often likewiſe employed to "lead captive" its hearers, by confounding the abuſes of religion with its genuine inſtruction; ſubverting the faith of thoſe who have not learnt to diſcriminate between the ſincerity of the revealed doctrines, and the perverted teaching of falſe profeſſors; and who forſaking religion becauſe errors have been countenanced by its pretended ſanction, but plunge into the unfathomable depths of human folly.

The characters of ſuperſtition and of religion are ſufficiently diſtinct, and may eaſily be underſtood by thoſe who do not wiſh to blend their deſcription. Their oppoſite effects may be fully illuſtrated from a comparative view of countries illumined by the reformed faith, and thoſe ſtill overſhadowed by the clouds of error. In the former, religion may be neglected; but it miſleads not in its eſtabliſhed decrees, to any practice offenſive to God, or injurious to man. In the latter, unpre-

judiced obſervation muſt admit, that the public faith is the polluted ſource and fountain of ſpeculative and practical evil.

Thoſe who would promote the influence of religion, muſt commend and invigorate the great principles eſtabliſhed at the Reformation. Even theſe principles, it is true, realize not the theoretic perfection of religion, becauſe they contend with the malignity of human corruption. The diſpenſations of the natural world, which at no time have left God "without a witneſs," produced but indirect teſtimonies of reverence, and erroneous expreſſion of worſhip; and when we lament the want of apparent effects from Revelation, be it remembered, that "this is "the condemnation, that light is come into "the world, and men loved darkneſs rather "than light, becauſe their deeds were evil."

SERMON II.

JOHN xviii. 36.

Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world.

THE rejection of earthly power, in the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity, was an eminent and characteriſtic proof of the Divine origin of that religion. Its great teacher, pleading an heavenly commiſſion, required not the aſſiſtance of the human arm. He withdrew from the election of popular favour *, and held back the ſword drawn by the zeal of his Diſciple †. He profeſſed to lay the foundations only of a ſpiritual kingdom, aiming at no dominion over the temporal poſſeſſions of men ‡; and

* John, ch. vi. ver. 15. † Matt. ch. xxvi. ver. 52.
‡ Luke, ch. xii. ver. 13, 14.

declaring, that though he were a king, his object was only, by "bearing witness unto "the truth," to establish an ascendency over the voluntary converts to its evidence.

With such meek and unassuming characters had the Messiah been pourtrayed in ancient description! "Behold my servant, whom I "uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul "delighteth. I have put my Spirit upon "him: he shall bring forth judgment to "the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift "up, nor cause his voice to be heard in "the street. A bruised reed shall he not "break, and the smoking flax shall he not "quench *." With correspondent designation was his kingdom also prefigured in prophecy, as a stone "cut out of the mountain "without hands," though destined ultimately to fill the earth †.

A dispensation revealed from above, and encircled with the testimonies and radiance of its origin, was not designed to wave on the banners of secular triumph; but was to rest its pretensions on its own evidence, and to depend on the promise of miraculous sup-

* Isaiah, ch. xlii. ver. 1—3.
† Dan. chap. ii. ver. 35, 45.

port.

port. With declared contempt of human ſtrength and greatneſs, God purpoſely choſe "the fooliſh things of the world to confound "the wiſe, and the weak things of the "world to confound the things that were "mighty." The reſiſtance which his religion encountered, ſerved but to illuſtrate the irreſiſtible efficacy of the ſpirit, which "warred not with carnal weapons," though "mighty through God to the pulling down "of ſtrong holds;" and the difficulties over which it proved victorious, "caſting down "imaginations, and every high thing that "exalted itſelf above the knowledge of "God," but furniſhed occaſion for the diſplay of the heavenly powers by which it was advanced.

From the tenor of theſe deſcriptions, and from the invariable repreſentations of Scripture as to the nature of Chriſt's kingdom, it is evident that it was deſigned to be a dominion erected on the conviction of mankind. All violent meaſures were diſclaimed, and our Lord appealed only to the works which he performed, and to the Scriptures and witneſſes which offered teſtimony to his pretenſions.

To ſuch a kingdom as Chriſt had received

from the Father, did he alſo appoint his Diſciples; who were to preſide over it for adminiſtration of his laws, with gradation of order and diſtinction of office *; as directors of a real ſociety eſtabliſhed, by an apparent ſovereign, with viſible repreſentation and external government; but who were not, "as "the kings of the earth exerciſe lordſhip," to challenge earthly dominion, or to aſſume earthly power †. Such as aſpired to ſuperiority, were to ſeek it by lowlineſs; and the differences of order, or conceded pre-eminence which were to ſubſiſt between them for the purpoſes of regularity and concert, were to be rendered ſubſervient to condeſcenſion and humility. The authority with

* Epheſ. ch. iv. ver. 11, 12. Acts, ch. xx. ver. 28.

† John, ch. xviii. ver. 36. Luke, ch. xxii. ver. 25—29. The texts here conſidered evidently reſpect the *exerciſe* as well as the *derivation* of the ſpiritual power. The earlier Chriſtians were ſenſible of the celeſtial nature of Chriſt's kingdom. It appears from Euſebius, that ſome grandſons of that St. Jude who was called, according to the fleſh, the brother of Jeſus, having, as derived from the race of David, excited the ſuſpicious jealouſy of Domitian, ſhewed, when interrogated concerning Chriſt, and the nature, time, and place of the appearance of his kingdom, that it was not to be a worldly or earthly, but an heavenly and angelic kingdom; to take place at the conſummation of time, when coming in his glory Chriſt ſhould judge the living and the dead: and by this account the tyrant was induced to put a ſtop to the perſecution which prevailed. Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. iii. c. 20.

which

which they were inveſted was entirely ſpiritual, was to addreſs only the conſcience, and to derive all its temporal ſanctions from the cheerful concurrence of the faithful.

Commiſſioned to propoſe the conditions of eternal remuneration, the preachers of the Goſpel derived from Chriſt no inſtruction to hold out preſent allurements, or to denounce preſent puniſhment. Whatever deeds of miraculous kindneſs or ſeverity might eventually characterize their miniſtry in confirmation of the Word *, of "ſilver and gold they had "none" to diſtribute, but from ſuch offerings as were voluntarily laid at their feet; and againſt the houſe or city which ſhould refuſe to hear their words, they were directed only to "ſhake off the duſt of their feet, as a teſ-"timony againſt them" of wrath to be treaſured up againſt the day of final judgment †.

All diſciples, it is true, who were admitted by baptiſm into the Church under the Goſpel conditions, were pledged to reverence the

* Acts, ch. iii. ver. 6. ch. xiii. ver. 11.

† Matt. ch. x. ver. 14, 15. Mark, ch. vi. ver. 7—11. Acts, ch. xiii. ver. 46, 51. ch. xviii. ver. 4—6.

functions,

functions, and to obey * the juſt inſtructions of thoſe who had undertaken a reſponſible charge. The Miniſters of Chriſt, as appointed ambaſſadors and expoſitors of his laws, were upon principles of eſſential propriety to be regarded as ſpeaking by his authority †. A commiſſion derived from his ſupremacy, and exerciſed in conformity to his precepts, could not be rejected but at the peril of incurring his indignation. Of ſuch diſobedience indeed the earlier diſciples of Chriſt were not guilty; and we find that, during the ages of primitive diſcipline, they

* Hebrews, ch. xiii. ver. 17. Tyndal, in his anxiety to annihilate the ſpiritual juriſdiction, intimates, that πειθεσθε ſhould be tranſlated "be perſuaded by," rather than "obey." The force of the precept is ſtill equally binding. See Rights of Chriſtian Church, ch. iv. p. 161.

† Matt. ch. x. ver. 40. Mark, ch. xiii. ver. 34. Luke, ch. x. ver. 16. ch. xxii. ver. 29. John, ch. xiii. ver. 20. Biſhop Hoadley, in his diſcourſe on John, ch. xviii. ver. 36. which gave riſe to the Bangorian controverſy, making no diſtinction between the inviſible and viſible Church, reſts his arguments upon the idea, that as Chriſt is the excluſive lawgiver of his kingdom, no one of his ſubjects is judge over others; omitting the conſiderations that every actual ſociety muſt have actual government; that Chriſt appointed Miniſters to execute his laws: to retain or to remit ſins, and to enact regulations, with conſent of the Church. To maintain that no new laws of direction are to be enacted, is to adopt the fancy of the Puritans, who reſpected no diſcipline but what was laid down in Scripture, and allowed no latitude for the diſcretionary application of principles, according to the variations of an inconſtant world.

paid

paid a cheerful reverence to the Miniſtry; ſubmitted, where they had offended, to private cenſure and public rebuke; performed ſuch penitential acts as were enjoined in expreſſive teſtimony of contrition, and aſſented to every regulation which their duly conſtituted rulers judged to be of expedient and beneficial tendency to the government of the Church.

The paſtors however were armed with no coercive authority of preſent effect, except that of expulſion of diſobedient members; and when no miraculous powers were exerted, no temporal control was aſſumed, even by thoſe who ordained "biſhops and deacons in every city *;" and delivered the rule of future ſucceſſion, directing that the elders who were to feed the

* 1 Tim. ch. iii. Philip. ch. i. ver. 1. Biſhops and deacons are mentioned collectively for the Miniſtry. It may be incidentally remarked, that Clemens Romanus applies the prediction in Iſaiah, ch. lx. ver. 17. to biſhops and deacons. The word rendered exactors in our tranſlation, is επισκοπους in the Septuagint verſion; and the word διακονους was probably ſubſtituted by Clemens, to ſignify the inferior rulers of the Church, inſtead of αρχοντας, in accommodation to our Lord's inſtruction in Matt. ch. xx. ver. 26. In the Chriſtian Church, indeed, all rulers are eſpecially ſervants; and the application of the prophecy is certainly ſtriking, whether we accept of the reading of Clemens or not. See Hammond, de Epiſcop. Diſſert. iv. The chapter relates to the time of the Meſſiah; and the Hebrew texts and interpretation countenance the application.

Church

Church of Chriſt ſhould "take the overſight" thereof, under due appointment indeed, but with conſent of the congregation* ; not as "Lords over God's heritage," but as "being "enſamples to the flock†;" as ſuch they were to proclaim the Goſpel terms of communion, and to provide for the public worſhip and external diſcipline of the Church ; but were not to exceed the limits of their authority by inventing arbitrary laws and conditions of faith ; or by impoſing any regimen with temporal ſanctions, till confirmed with the uſual operation of good government, and regulated in agreement with the deliberate approbation of the ſociety.

The

* Acts, ch. i. ch. vi. ver. 3—5. ch. xiii. ver. 2. καταστα-θεντας υπ' εκεινων, that is, by the Apoſtles and their ſucceſſors, ſays Clemens, συευδοκησασης της εκκλησιας πασης. Clem. Rom. Ep. i. §. 44. Origen, Hom. in Levit. Concil. Nicæn.

† 1 Peter, ch. v. ver. 3. Matt. ch. xx. ver. 25. The right of the Biſhops and Clergy to regulate the diſcipline of the Church, in ſpiritual matters affecting the Laity as well as Clergy, appears to have been generally admitted in the primitive ages ; though important laws were uſually paſſed in the preſence of, and with conſent of the people. See Acts, ch. xv. ver. 22, 23. "Solus reſcribere nihil potui," ſays St. Cyprian (on an application from Donatus), "quando a primordio "Epiſcopatus mei ſtatuarim nihil ſine conſilio veſtro & ſine conſenſu plebis, meâ privatim ſententiâ gerere." Cyprian, Ep. xiv. vide alſo Ep. xxx. Edit Fell. Potter ſtrains upon theſe paſſages diſingenuouſly, and to no purpoſe. It is clear that the Biſhops had the proper title to direct ; but they required the preſence and

The ſpiritual juriſdiction of the Church, however it might reſpect external objects, did not interfere with any juſt appointments of civil government. The gradations of its Miniſtry, as marked by no temporal privileges and diſtinctions, affected no intereſts of temporal inſtitution. The deſcriptions which the Goſpel held out preſented no objects to ſeduce men from their allegiance to lawful powers. It left them citizens of exiſting ſtates, and ſubjects of exiſting laws. It paid "tribute to "whom tribute was due;" and whatever of compulſive ſupport was delegated to the rulers of the Church in aid of that diſcipline which was eſſential to its preſervation, ſhould have been conſidered as an emanation from earthly power; not to be employed to the eſtabliſhment of an independent empire,

and concurrence of the people, over whom they had no compulſive power. See Diſcourſe on Church Government. Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas. The learned Writer overlooks even the ολη τη εκκλησια in Acts, ch. xv. ver. 22. and labours with idle criticiſm and elaborate miſrepreſentation to ſubvert the indiſputable fact, which at laſt he is obliged to admit, that in the primitive Church the Preſbyters and people were generally conſulted in the decrees which reſpectively affected them. Rogers fairly admits a conſent of approbation, though not of authority, in the brethren of the Apoſtolic Council, mentioned in Acts xv. See Rogers's Review in reply to Sykes. The changing diſcipline of the Church towards the end of the 4th century departed from the cuſtom, and the Reformation reſtored it. See Act. Concil. Carthag. in Cyprian. p. 158.

but

but in ſubjection to the control of ſecular government.

Conſtituted upon theſe principles, the kingdom of Chriſt, diſcountenanced or protected by the civil power, was to be ſubmitted to the direction of thoſe who were qualified to ſuperintend its concerns; but who were not authoriſed to diſturb any civil regulations, or to compel the acceptance of their meaſures by any coactive ſanction, till ratified by the approbation of the community. The coercive power which might be requiſite to enforce the decrees of eccleſiaſtical inſtitution, was to be derived from the regulations of a ſocial œconomy; and to be reſtricted or enlarged in conformity to the deciſions of the general ſentiment; and ſhould be regarded, not as a ſword of the Miniſtry conveyed by their ſpiritual commiſſion, but as a legitimate exerciſe of that authority which muſt reſide in every well conſtituted ſociety, for the enforcing of reſpect to its own laws.

A departure from theſe maxims in two important deviations, as reſpecting the conteſts between Churches co-ordinate and equal in their inſtitution, and the eſtabliſhment of an independent and temporal power in the Clergy

Clergy over the Laity, was productive of many evils, of which a curſory and collected view may illuſtrate the importance of ſome principles, reſtored by the firſt efforts of the Reformation in England.

In reflecting on the deſcription of paſt times, it is the duty and intereſt of all who are concerned for the glory, and anxious to promote the influence of religion, to advert principally to thoſe impediments to its ſucceſs, which have ariſen in departments in which they are eſpecially concerned. The paſtors and teachers of a Reformed Church are never implicated but by ignorance or malevolence in the charges againſt the vitiated rulers who diſgraced the Chriſtian profeſſion in former times: but while with the confidence of a renewed ſpirit they reject the indiſcriminate imputations which have been profuſely dealt out againſt the miniſterial character, they will inveſtigate with candid and impartial enquiry every ſource from which corruption may have flowed.

When, from diſregard to the uniform precepts of our Lord, the influence and power which naturally reſulted from appointment to the ſacred office became in themſelves the

objects

objects of ambition, a fatal change was effected in the government of the Church. New grounds of distinction were established, and disparities introduced, which neither the ordinances of Christ had authorised, nor the welfare of the community required. That pre-eminence of direction which the Apostles* and their successors had allowed among themselves for the purposes alone of regularity and order, and in perfect consistency with equal claims of authority, was made the foundation for the erection of fictitious pretensions. The occasional president at the synod, and the elated bishop of the larger di-

* St. James, St. Peter, and St. John, seem to have been allowed a kind of pre-eminence over the Apostles, as "pillars" of the Church and chief Apostles; see Galat. ch. ii. ver. 9. 2 Cor. ch. xi. ver. 5. probably as eminently distinguished by our Lord, and as having been present at the more intimate events and transactions of his life. St. Peter appears to have taken the lead for some time after our Saviour's ascension. See Acts, ch. i. ver. 15. ch. ii. ver. 14, 37. ch. iv. ver. 8. ch. v. ver. 15, 29. This however was a mere priority of place, not of order or power. Afterwards James, who, according to tradition, was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem by the Apostles on their quitting that city, possessed the right of convening councils, and of presiding at them. See Acts, ch. xii. ver. 17. ch. xv. ver. 13, 19. ch. xxi. ver. 18. Gal. ch. ii. ver. 12. The precedency does not seem to have led him to forget our Saviour's instructions. The episcopal chair or throne of St. James was preserved with great veneration at Jerusalem in the time of Eusebius. Eccles. Hist. l. vii. c. 19.

oceſe *, aſſumed an unequal title and a controlling power.

As preſent intereſts intermingled in the cauſe, the diſſenſions and hereſies which from the firſt had been engendered by the vanities of human wiſdom, gathered ſtrength and importance, and diſturbed the unity and peaceful conſtitution of the Church. The decrees of its lawful authority were weakened by difference of ſentiment. Judgment was ſet up againſt judgment, and deciſions were evaded by inſidious appeals. The paſſions which had been ſuppreſſed were again raiſed; and the objects which appeared to conſecrate their exertions, were favourable only to the impending dominion of an antichriſtian ſpirit †. As pride and emulation pervaded every order and department, diſhonourable conteſts were provoked, and mutual encroachments of juriſdiction were attempted. The rights of the inferior orders of the Miniſtry were invaded, the diſtinctions of the higher degrees

* The ſynods, aſſembled in the ſecond and following centuries, contributed to raiſe the pretenſions of thoſe who preſided in them. The pattern of the Hebrew prieſthood was pleaded in apology for the aſſumption of exterior ſplendour.

† Imminente Antichriſto, ſays Cyprian, Epiſt. lix.

uſurped, and the independency of ſeparate Churches ſuperſeded or controlled.

As a deſire alſo to eſtabliſh an aſcendency, where no advancement of the ſpiritual intereſts of Chriſt's kingdom was concerned, unhappily prevailed, the veneration of the people for the Miniſtry was abuſed. Their legitimate claim to be conſulted in regulations of general intereſt was overlooked. Their application to their biſhops and paſtors for arbitration in civil diſputes; and the charitable inſtructions of the Goſpel, were produced as a juſtification for the coercive interference of the clergy in ſecular concerns *. The offerings cheerfully poured out by a grateful piety were accumulated, and ſeduced the imagination of thoſe who had before glorried as being "poor, yet making many "rich †." The conſtancy of that fortitude which had been diſplayed "in much pati-

* Ambroſe, Epiſt. xxiv. Auguſt. Sem. xxiv. in Pſalm cxviii. St. Auſtin conſidered the Biſhops as virtually bound to the office of arbitration by 1 Cor. ch. vi. ver. 4. See Bingham's Antiq. b. ii. ch. 7. Euſeb. de Vit. Conſt. l. iv. c. 27. But a foundation was hereby laid for more invidious and hurtful pretenſions—for a delegation of the cauſe to ſubordinate Miniſters—and gradually for the erection of temporal, under the title of Spiritual Courts.

† Cyprian. de Lapſis.

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" ence and in afflictions," began to yield, and ſhrink from the ſevere trials which prevailed; " to fall away," when " tribulation " aroſe*;" and to profeſs the faith only when it flouriſhed in the courts of worldly protection. Even the ſtern integrity, which had endured perſecution and oppreſſion, relaxed in ſeaſons of ſecurity and peace; and the Diſciples of that Lord to whom the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, had been vainly proffered, gazed with too eager fondneſs on thoſe proſpects of advantage which occaſionally brightened in the viciſſitudes of the Church, captivating unworthy members to engage in the ſacred office. A ſolicitude to retain the veneration, merited by the genuine virtues of Chriſtian fortitude, excited fruitleſs exertions and ineffectual auſterity. Hence undue conceſſions to popular prejudice, and vain imitations of Heathen practices. Hence, as the Spirit had expreſsly foretold, " a departure

* In the furious and unrelenting perſecutions carried on by Decius Trajan in the third century, the Church had firſt occaſion to lament the apoſtacy of ſome of its members, whoſe eagerneſs for readmiſſion to Communion, when ſecurity was reſtored, was the cauſe of great diſſenſions. See the Epiſtles of Cyprian, the venerable advocate for diſcipline, and Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. lib. vi. cap. 44.

" from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing ſpi-
" rits and doctrines of devils, ſpeaking lies in
" hypocriſy, forbidding to marry, and com-
" manding to abſtain from meats, which
" God hath created to be received with
" thankſgiving of them which believe and
" know the truth *," boaſting its ſuſpected continence † and counterfeit reſtraint.

Hence alſo it was that " bodily exerciſe, " profiting little," and founded on abject conceptions of God, was preferred to " godlineſs, " profitable unto all things ;" though having only the ſhow of wiſdom, as without humility, and " placing the kingdom of God in meat and " drink :" conducting the diſciples of him, who went about doing good to mankind, to aſcetic devotion and ſolitary rigor, and inflaming the zeal which ſhould work by love, to waſte its vigour in myſtic contemplation, productive

* 1 Tim. ch. iv. ver. 1—3. See the account of Tatian in Moſheim, cent. ii. p. 2. § 9. & Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. iii.

† See the account of the συνεισακτοι, of a vicious and ſeductive cuſtom adopted from the Heathen philoſophers, and firſt introduced into the Church of Antioch, by Paul of Samoſata, in the third century. The cuſtom muſt have extenſively prevailed, as it is condemned by Cyprian, Baſil, Chryſoſtom, and Jerom, and the Councils of Antioch, Ancyra, and Nice. See Dodwell's Diſſert. Cyrian. iii.

of

of ſplenetic pride * and extravagant follies. The arts of worldly contrivance were employed to render Chriſtianity ſubſervient to human projects; and whatever would tend to ſtrengthen and extend its influence was incorporated with it, in accommodation to the prevailing paſſions and prejudices of mankind. The errors of exceſſive devotion, the ſplendid rites and impoſing ceremonies of Paganiſm, were countenanced by an indulgent policy †. The frauds of the Heathen prieſthood were revived, and the follies of the Gentile philoſophy allowed to adulterate the tranſlations of the Scriptures, and the commentaries on inſpired wiſdom.

In the uſurpation of the Papal power, gradually erected in that city, which was deſtined a ſecond time to rule over the

* Paul, who ſet the example of retirement to the Chriſtians, by flying from the perſecution of Decius, had probably imbibed the fantaſtic principles of the myſtic theology. He lived in the deſarts of Thebais, in a manner conſiſtent with the notions of the Eaſtern hermits. The melancholy ſpirit of ſeclusion increaſed conſiderably in the fourth century, under the inſtructions of Dionyſius the Areopagite, and laid the foundation of mockery, the diſcipline of which was regulated by Anthony. Bingham's Chriſtian Antiq. b. vii.

† Incenſe was introduced into ſome Churches in the third century. See Beveridge ad Canon. Apoſt. p. 461. See alſo Auguſt. Epiſt. 119.

nations of the earth *, we behold a portraiture of the corruption which almoſt every where debaſed and disfigured the Chriſtian world. The veneration due to a Church claiming the dignity of being founded by diſtinguiſhed Apoſtles at the central ſeat of empire, and in the firſt ages celebrated for eſpecial purity of faith †, led other countries to receive, as of ſacred inſtitution, thoſe doctrines which were contrived only to conſpire with views of worldly aggrandiſement, and which, when found to be productive

* ——— Pegaſeus Tibi
Temo, volaturuſque latè
Regna ſuper populoſque currus.
Caſimir, Ode iii. ad Urban. VIII.

This is inſufficient.

Magnuſque latè diceris arbiter
Cœlumque, Terraſque, et Maria, et Styga,
Amnemque Cocyti ſeverum, et
Elyſiam cohibere Lethen. See Ode x.

It would have been well if the flattery had been confined to poetry.

† Irenæus, who oppoſed the arrogant aſſumptions of Victor, in the diſpute about the celebration of Eaſter, with great prudence and moderation, mentions the Church of Rome as a very great and ancient Church, which preſerved, in common with other Churches governed by the Biſhops, in ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles, the genuine and unſuſpected traditions and faith which the Apoſtles delivered; and maintains that the ſincerity of doctrine might be decided by an appeal to that Church; which was allowed to have preſerved it uncorrupt, and which, on account of its eminent and principal dignity, had the right to

ductive of preſent advantage, were retained, even by thoſe Churches which reſiſted the pretenſions of Rome, and rejected the ſupremacy which it endeavoured to uſurp *.

When the Imperial throne was removed by Conſtantine to a diſtant capital, the ambition of the Biſhops of the new metropolis was ſupported by the partial favour of the Emperor and his ſucceſſors; and as titles, riches, and privileges were laviſhed with oſtentatious profuſion on the rivals of the Roman Pontiffs, the incentives to jealouſy and diſſenſion were multiplied. The emulation which flamed with increaſing violence between the contending Churches, involved every dependent intereſt in the diſgraceful ſtruggle. Raiſed above the Churches of the

to be conſulted. By this he does not concede any pre-eminence of juriſdiction to the Romiſh Church, but urges its authority againſt heretics, as eminent and unqueſtionable. Cont. Hær. l. iii. c. 3. When claims of ſuperiority over other Churches, as to deciſion and authority, were afterwards ſet up, Cyprian and other Biſhops indignantly rejected them; and the African Churches pronounced excommunication againſt all who ſhould appeal to foreign Churches. Cyprian. Epiſt. lv. & Præfat. in Concil. Carthag. & de Simplic. Prælat. Hieron. Epiſt. ad Evag. The Church of Rome attempted to ground its pretenſions on a ſuſpected Canon of the Council of Sardis, and on forged decrees of later Councils. Appeals were not allowed by the Councils of Nice or Conſtantinople.

* Stillingfleet, Orig. Britan. 226. St. Peter's ſucceſſor, like the Apoſtle, firſt confeſſed, and afterwards denied Chriſt.

Eaſt *, the Biſhops of Conſtantinople, while they rejected the aſſumptions of the Paſtors of the antient capital, were accuſed of aiming themſelves at the univerſal ſupremacy of the Church. The conteſt, though it implicated trivial ſubjects of diſpute, excited no difference of ſentiment on eſſential errors, but ſerved only to diſgrace the cauſe of religion, till it terminated in ſchiſm and mutual excommunication †.

The ſtrongeſt illuſtration, however, of the fatal effects which have reſulted from a diſregard to the character of Chriſt's kingdom, and to which, in connection with our ſub-

* In the Council of Conſtantinople, A. D. 381, the Biſhop of that city, by authority of Theodoſius the Great, was placed in the firſt rank after the Biſhop of Rome, to the prejudice of the claims of Antioch and Alexandria. The ſucceſſors of Nectarius availed themſelves of the diſtinction, to extend their power. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 aſſigned the ſame privileges to the Biſhop of Conſtantinople, as the Council of Nice had appointed to that of Rome. See Can. 28. The Biſhops of Conſtantinople had been allowed the title of Univerſal Biſhop, by Leo and Juſtinian, without aſſuming therefrom much acceſſion of power. In the 6th century Gregory the Great took much umbrage at the title, and vigorouſly oppoſed it, as deſigned to eſtabliſh a real and antichriſtian claim. See Moſheim, cent. vi. p. ii. ch. 2.

† See the account of the conteſt concerning Photius in the ninth century, and of that between Cerularius and Leo IX. in the eleventh century, which produced a final breach of communion; and in which a pretended zeal for religion, in trivial points, was made a pretext for ambitious diſſenſion.

ject,

ject, we cannot but allude, was exhibited after the inveſtiture of the Roman Pontiff with the majeſty of a temporal prince, when "he received from the dragon his "power, and his ſeat, and great autho- "rity*;" then it was that every ambitious paſſion was inflamed, and the Tempter wor- ſhipped for the glory of thoſe kingdoms which he diſplayed. The deſire of enlarging the territory, and of increaſing the political influence of the Popes, led them to interfere with every government, and to intermingle their deſtructive principles, till they looſened and moulded its frame in accommodation to their intereſts. As their portentous ſhade extended, they erected in almoſt every land an hierarchy, often independent of the civil

* Rev. ch. xiii. ver. 2. Pepin compelled Aiſtulphus to reſign to the ſee of Rome the exarchate of Ravenna and Pentapolis, and other territories, and reinforced the ceſſion the following year. Charlemagne, and the partial reſpect of Mathilda, daughter of Boniface, Duke of Tuſcany, to Gregory VII. added conſiderable grants to the papal dominion, which was at firſt held as a kind of feudal tenure, in ſubjection to the Emperor, who nominated or confirmed the election of the Pope. Innocent III. poſſeſſed the whole territory from the Adriatic to Oſtia. The ſpiritual juriſdiction, as Gibbon has obſerved, was extended from the coaſt of the Baltic to the ſhores of the Pacific Ocean.

authority,

authority *, endowed with regal grants and titles †, claiming injurious privileges and dangerous exemptions ‡; ſtrengthening the arbitrary powers under which it flouriſhed, and domineering with haughty inſolence over the princes whom it governed.

Confident in the ſtrong dominion which they had eſtabliſhed, the aſpiring pontiffs affected, as occaſion ſerved, with imperious tones and forged pretenſions §, the ſupreme direction of an

* That Prieſts were to be honoured, and not judged by Sovereigns—that a cuſtom contrary to a decree of the Pope was void—that a clerk was not to be ſued in a temporal court, under pain of anathema to the plaintiff, and of excommunication to the judge, were maxims of the Canon law. See Can. 15. Concil. Lateran. Reeve's Hiſt. of Engliſh Law, Vol. I. ch. ii.

† The public grants, or regalia of territory with which ſuperſtitious princes and ſovereign ſtates, who in tumultuous times wiſhed to avail themſelves of the Clergy, inveſted eccleſiaſtical perſons, and which conveyed temporal titles and royalties, were particularly injurious to their character; converting them into ſecular princes, and leading them to engage in military operations and political intrigues. Theſe miſchievous grants took place particularly in the 8th century, under the partial countenance of Pepin.

‡ The claim of exemption from the civil juriſdiction has been maintained by the Romiſh Clergy, in remarkable inſtances, within very recent periods. It is well known that, in order to puniſh the Jeſuit Malagrida in Portugal for his crimes, it was thought neceſſary to convict him by the Inquiſition, not for treaſon, but hereſy, upon ſome frivolous charge.

§ See the account of the decretals and other forgeries in Mich. Geddes's Diſſert. de Canon. Sardicenſ. in Miſcellan. Tract.

an univerſal ſovereignty*; maintained not only by the influence of ſuperſtition and perverted literature †, which chained the deluded nations in their bondage; but by a peculiar juriſprudence ‡, uniting with, and controlling the municipal laws of the independent kingdoms, which they ruled, as fiefs as it were of the papal ſee; which they haraſſed with vexatious and inquiſitorial courts; and governed by inſidious agents, united in general diſperſion by the ſtrongeſt ties, and bounden by

Tract. tom. ii. p. 415. & Moſheim. cent. 9. p. 2. § 2. Murator. Droit de St. Empire ſur l'Etat. Eccleſ. Baron. Annal. 865. § 8.

* That an univerſal and abſolute power over temporal as well as ſpiritual concerns, hath been claimed by divers Popes, ſucceſſively for many ages, in ſolemn declarations and notorious practices never formerly diſclaimed, is fully ſhewn by Barrow, in his treatiſe on the Pope's Supremacy. It is neceſſary occaſionally to review theſe teſtimonies, as they have been overlooked in ſome recent repreſentations of the Pope.

† The Popes ſeized every channel of literature. In the fourteenth century they had adopted moſt of the extravagancies of philoſophy, and employed its volumes in ſubſerviency to their deſigns; prohibiting all books which they did not approve. Cardinal Pallavachini once remarked, Senza Ariſtotele noi mancavaremo molti articoli da fede.

‡ The civil law, written in a language underſtood by few but the Clergy, was ſubſervient to the ſupport of the undefined pretenſions of the eccleſiaſtical power; and when the ſpiritual were ſeparated entirely from the temporal courts, juſtice was flagrantly violated. The civil and canon law gradually interwove their decrees with the common law, and coloured it to a reſemblance of their character.

oaths

oaths of fealty to their ſervice *; extending their foreign influence as their domeſtic government became wretched and deſpiſed; draining with inſatiable avarice from every country, revenues to feed the corruption and inſtigate the violence of their perſecuting and ſanguinary Miniſters; and proclaiming with final extravagance an authority ſuperior to that of the inſpired writings, of which the ſacred volume was cloſed, and concealed from an unhappy Church †.

The proud waves of this uncontrolled ambition, which daſhed againſt every ſhore, extended with peculiar violence to this country; undermining its monuments of civil liberty, and defacing its moſt ſacred rights. Treated as a Roman province, as the patrimony of the Church, its ſovereigns had been degraded and trampled on ‡; its legiſlature

* Gregory VII. Urban II. and Paſchal II. required an oath of excluſive allegiance, deſtructive of fidelity to princes. See alſo Pontiff. Roman. in Conſec. Epiſc.

† The uſe of the Scriptures was interdicted by the Lateran Council under Innocent III. a prohibition enforced by ſucceeding Popes.

‡ See John's oath of homage to Innocent III. Collyer's Collect. of Records, Vol. I.

overawed;

overawed *; its valuable preferment foreſtalled and poſſeſſed by foreigners, and the whole nation oppreſſed by the vexatious tyranny of a juriſdiction contending for independency of civil control †, and ſubjecting the whole diſcipline and doctrine of the Church to profit.

By whatever motives Henry was excited to throw off the Papal ſupremacy, it was a meaſure which removed at once the complicated cauſes of thoſe evils which have been deſcribed, as to their operation in this country. It effected by one bold exertion what the predeceſſors of the king had often laboured to eſtabliſh, a diſtinction between the

* Till the time of Richard II. the Archbiſhops were empowered by Bulls from Rome to aſſemble their Clergy without permiſſion of the king, and to paſs canons and conſtitutions, binding with the king's ſanction. Statute of Premunire, A. D. 1593. The ſuppreſſion of the Knights Templars, and the aſſignment of their land to the Knights Hoſpitallers, now Knights of Malta, confirmed by ſtatute of proviſion in 1531, and the Legantine Court of Wolſey, exhibit farther proofs of the Pope's aſſumption of temporal power in England; and the pecuniary exactions were vexatious and exceſſive.

† William the Conqueror authoriſed a diſſolution of the joint juriſdiction of the Biſhops and Sheriffs, and the ſeparate eſtabliſhment of the ſpiritual courts for the excluſive trial of ſpiritual cauſes. The Canon law, which the Biſhops uſed, ſoon embraced more temporal concerns in this country than in any other; as teſtamentary cauſes, tithes, inteſtacies, civil contracts, &c. See Blackſtone, and Reeves's Hiſt. of Engliſh Law.

ſpiritual

ſpiritual and temporal powers*; and releaſed the kingdom from an iron yoke of grievous impoſition, under which it had long groaned with impatience and reluctant indignation.

The beneficial effects which reſulted from the rejection of this uſurpation, may be illuſtrated in three principal points of view. In the firſt, as it precluded all intercourſe of foreign power, and all conteſts of ſpiritual pre-eminence with other countries, by aſſerting the independency of every Church as to the regulation of its internal diſcipline. In

* Bramhall's juſt Vindication of the Church of England. Alfred, who, as well as other Saxon kings, had oppoſed the aſſumptions of the Papal power, withſtood for ſix years the Pope's endeavour to reſtore Wilfride, Archbiſhop of York, and told the Pope's Nuncios, that he "honoured them as his parents, for their grave lives and venerable aſpects; but that "he would not give any aſſent to their legation; becauſe it was "againſt reaſon that a perſon once condemned by the whole "Engliſh council ſhould be reſtored upon the Pope's letter;" and the Archbiſhop was not reinſtated till he quitted the monaſteries of Hengeſthill, Dean, and Ripon. "Fidelitatem facere nolui nec volo," ſaid William the Conqueror. William II. maintained his right of the inveſtiture of the Biſhops, and forbad all appeals to, or intercourſe with, Rome. Henry the Firſt and Second, John, and other princes, conteſted, and often felt the weight of the Papal power. Edward the Firſt particularly availed himſelf of the Avignon ſchiſm, to depreſs the uſurpation. Some of theſe princes appear to have diſputed the ſpiritual, as well as temporal pretenſions of the Popes, artfully and ſucceſsfully maintained as they were. See Matthew Paris, Hiſt. Mag. p. 82, 83, 101, 104. and Wilkins's Concil. Mag. Brit. t. i. p. 434.

the

the ſecond, as it re-eſtabliſhed the Church of Chriſt, as exiſting in this country, on the baſis of a ſpiritual kingdom, ſubject in civil concerns to the civil power. In the third, as it reſtored the Miniſtry to the legitimate object of their profeſſion; the eſtabliſhment of truth.

The evils diſplayed in curſory deſcription in the preceding part of this diſcourſe, as the fatal conſequences of thoſe ambitious conteſts of ſuperiority which gradually changed the character of Chriſt's kingdom, exhibit but an imperfect ſketch of the diſgraceful circumſtances which the ſucceſſive ſcenes of hiſtory diſcloſe. By nothing could they be ſo effectually counteracted, as by the adoption of the important principle of the independency of every Church in its national character; as ſubject to no ſpiritual head but Chriſt; as conceding no ſuperiority, and claiming no pre-eminence of juriſdiction; as authoriſed to frame its own laws, and to regulate its own government. This principle it is, which, while it tends to reduce the different aſſemblies of Chriſt's Diſciples to the level of that equality which He eſtabliſhed, excludes all emulation but that of fidelity to his ſervice, and diſclaims every idea of mutual animoſity and perſecution;

tion; which, while it acknowledges no paſtor of an univerſal Church, limited to mortal exertions, ſubmits the preſervation of the purity of the individual eſtabliſhment to the vigilance of its immediate guardians, reſponſible for the integrity of the faith, the common pledge committed to the cuſtody of all, only to Chriſt and his univerſal Church, and reſtricted in the regulation of the exterior regimen of the ſociety only by orders of neceſſary inſtitution, and conſiderations of local expediency; which, while it recedes merely from a nominal centre, preſerves its appointed orbit, violating no connection of Catholic union, deranging no ſyſtem of general harmony.

This important principle, grounded on the eſſential character of a ſpiritual kingdom, and conſecrated by the ſanction of the Apoſtles and firſt ages *, was the foundation laid by our Reformers, to authoriſe thoſe changes by which they ſought to reſtore the image and decayed character of the Primitive Church. In the language of early and unadulterated truth they declared, that "all "the Apoſtles were equal, and all the Bi- "ſhops were alſo equal, ſince the whole

* Con. Nic. Can. vi. Concil. Conſt. c. 3.

"office

" office and epiſcopate was one entire thing, " of which every Biſhop had a complete and " equal ſhare *." Anxious to exhibit in the excellency of their renewed Church a conformity to the pureſt model, they withdrew not from the original platform of the Catholic faith, but from the innovations of modern corruption. Cordial to maintain the fellowſhip of general ſanctity, they preſumed not to repreſent the light of ſalvation as beaming only within the reſtricted limits of a national eſtabliſhment, but conſidered all who were united by " one bap- " tiſm" to " one faith," as common Diſciples of " one Lord," common members of one Church †.

This principle, however, when adopted in its moſt extenſive ſenſe, did not give any countenance to unneceſſary revolutions or diviſions; ſince, though it admitted the right of every community to withdraw from eſſential and fundamental corruptions, and to eſtabliſh and regulate its own eccleſiaſtical diſcipline, it furniſhed no apo-

* Cyprian. de Unitate. Burnet, Vol. I. b. ii. fol. 138. Collyer's Collect. of Records, Vol. II. fol. 18.

† Nowell's Catechiſm, p. 96. Acts, ch. x. ver. 34, 35. Gal. ch. vi. ver. 15, 16. Epheſ. ch. iv. ver. 5. Col. ch. iii. ver. 11, 12, Matt. ch. xxviii. ver. 19.

logy for cauſeleſs ſeparation or wanton diſturbance of general conſtitutions: it did not ſet up the individual congregation in oppoſition to the Catholic Church, nor erect private judgment as commenſurate to the deliberate deciſion of the ſpiritual authority. Conſecrated on the ground of religious liberty, it became the baſis of toleration, and produced immediate effects in the indulgence conceded to congregations of foreigners in this country *; though indeed a farther extenſion of its import was neceſſary to embrace the rights of the individual ſubject to the enjoyment of an unfettered conſcience, and to that uncontrolled freedom of worſhip which is now allowed.

The retroſpect of the corruptions of the Romiſh Church which has been made, may ſerve alſo to illuſtrate the important advantages which could not but reſult from ſubjecting to lawful control a powerful and ambitious clergy, who, ſkreened under formidable protection, and claiming exemption from civil courts †, had been tempted to the indulgence

* As that of John A-laſco, and the French and Walloon Churches. See Burnet and Clarendon's Hiſt. vol. ii. p. 174.

† An oath was impoſed on Stephen, that eccleſiaſtical perſons and cauſes ſhould be ſubject only to the juriſdiction of the biſhop.

indulgence of every vicious paſſion; whoſe juriſdiction, nearly paramount to the legiſlative dominion of the country, had exerciſed a tyranny of the moſt offenſive and dangerous character.

From the firſt meaſures of Henry, which cut away the root of the Papal uſurpation, every branch of the independent power of the Clergy ſoon withered and decayed. Their coercive authority, juſtly conſidered as of human appointment, was reſtrained, by qualifications judged expedient by the State *; and

biſhop. Blackſtone, b. iii. ch. 8. Henry I. forbad any clerk to attend in temporal courts. In ſucceeding reigns there were many conteſts on this point. King John, after the conſtitutions of Clarendon had paſſed, conceded to the Clergy that no clerk ſhould for the future be brought perſonally before any ſecular judge for any crime or tranſgreſſion, except for offences againſt the foreſt laws; or in the caſe of a lay fee, for which ſervice was due to the king, or ſome other ſecular perſon. See Reeves's Hiſt. of Engliſh Law, vol. i. p. 179. Edward IV. confirmed the exemptions from arreſt in criminal cauſes and penalties of premunire. Collyer, Vol. I. 52. Places of worſhip were conſidered as ſanctuaries from the Saxon times, by a privilege uſeful in turbulent and vindictive ages, but dreadfully pernicious in later periods. Many abbeys were, by uſurpation or conceſſion, exempted from all juriſdiction of Pope or King.

* 25 Henry VIII. c. 14. Burnet, Vol. I. b. ii. fol. 147. Collyer, Vol. II. p. ii. b. ii. fol. 83. The power which the Clergy derived from the conſent of their congregations before they were protected by the State, may be conſidered under Chriſtian governments as a derivation from the State. The State ſhould indeed then be regarded not in oppoſition to the Church, but as conſtituting a part of it—as the Laity of the Church.

their jurisdiction, as far as it was derived from civil delegation, was regulated in due subserviency to civil interests *. The Church became as the Hebrew Church † under the kingly government; and the Christian Church ‡ in the earlier ages, as to its external direction, and temporal privileges and immunities, subject to a civil head, and controlable by the civil legislature.

If in the separation from the Papal supremacy the line of discrimination between the spiritual and temporal powers was inaccurately drawn §; if, in surrendering the complicated

* In the preamble to 25th of Henry VIII. c. 21. Parliament is said to have authority to abrogate, null, amplify, or dispense with all human laws of this realm. The King is head of the Church only as the representative of the Supreme Power of the state. His power as such must be sanctioned by Parliament; and laws passed under his authority in convocation, are not supposed to be binding on the Laity till confirmed by Parliament. See Strange's Reports.

† 1 Sam. ch. xv. ver. 17. 1 Kings, ch. ii. ver. 26, 27, 35. 1 Chron. ch. xxiii. ver. 6. ch. xxiv. ver. 3. ch. xxviii. ver. 21. 2 Chron. ch. vii. ver. 8, 9. ch. viii. ver. 14, 15. ch. xxiv. ver. 5—9 Collyer's Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. p. ii. b. ii.

‡ Matt. ch. xvii. ver. 22. Rom. ch. xiii. ver. 7. 1 Peter, ch. ii. ver. 13. After the establishment of Christianity under the temporal protection, the Emperors passed ecclesiastical laws, and summoned councils. The Kings of England had generally considered the civil supremacy as their right, as could be shewn from the time of Lucius.

§ The spiritual rights of the Clergy would probably never have been affected, had they not been blended with the assump-

tion

plicated and entangled claims, interwoven by long preſcription with the ſpiritual authority, ſome undue conceſſions were made to imperious invaſion *, and ſome rights incautiouſly

tion of temporal power. Henry's tyrannical temper could not brook the idea of any authority but his own. He was embarraſſed, and wiſhed to evade the force of Acts, ch. xx. ver. 28. Heb. ch xiii, ver. 17. and his jealouſy of the former pretenſions of the Clergy led him to declarations injurious to their ſpiritual rights. He affirmed in his Letter to the Convocation what was not ſtrictly true, that he claimed nothing more by the ſupremacy than what Chriſtian kings in primitive times aſſumed in their own dominions. The Clergy, who in 1530 firſt reluctantly conceded the ſupremacy to the king, did it with reſerve, and as far as might conſiſt with the laws of Chriſt; and 26th of Henry VIII. c. 1. was made with reference to this declaration, which was followed by many others in the ſame ſtrain. See Declar. on the Functions and Divine Inſtitut. of Biſhops; Burnet's Adden. fol. 1. p. 321; and Plowden's Church and State, b. iii. ch. 6. The ſucceſſors of Henry ſhrunk from this claim, though they ſometimes aſſumed undue powers; and it was gradually perceived that they might decline the ſpiritual without injury to the temporal authority. See Preamble to 25th Henry VIII. c. 21; Injunctions of Elizabeth, 37th Article, &c.

* The 25th of Henry VIII. c. 9. which gave to commiſſioners, appointed by the king, a power of abrogating Canons, and which allowed appeals to the king in court of delegates, ſeems to affect the ſpiritual rights of the Clergy, but was probably deſigned to give to the king a cognizance only of civil matters; "ſuch as affected his prerogative, or the laws of the "realm." One of the laws of the Reformatio Legum Eccleſiaſticarum, eſtabliſhed in virtue of this act, certainly tranſgreſſes the line, when it aſſerts that all juriſdiction, eccleſiaſtical as well as ſecular, is derived from the king, as the only fountain. Many ſtatutes, and the firſt oaths of ſupremacy, hold the ſame looſe language; giving all manner of ſpiritual and eccleſiaſtical authority to the king, and taking it from the Biſhops, except as it exiſts by delegation from, and dependency on him.

incautiouſly or baſely relinquiſhed *, they were ſteadily reclaimed, and finally recovered. The Church, in the ultimate and permanent deſcription of its character, was countenanced in the poſſeſſion of its legitimate powers, but was underſtood, in its juſt definition, to be a congregation compoſed of Laity as well as Clergy.

The ſpiritual privileges of its duly ap-

See 26th Hen. VIII. c. 1. 31ſt Hen. VIII. c. 17. 37th Hen. VIII. c. 17. 1ſt Edw. VI. c. 2. 1ſt Eliz. c. 1. 1ſt James I. c. 25. 13th Car. II. c. 12. The 25th of Henry VIII. c. 20. gave alſo too much to the civil power, when it compelled the Biſhops, under the penalty of premunire, to conſecrate perſons nominated or elected to a biſhopric. But however exceptionable the terms of theſe ſtatutes, it does not appear that any deliberate intention exiſted, or was underſtood to exiſt in the legiſlature, to authoriſe any invaſion of the purely ſpiritual authority of the Biſhops.

* The ſurrender of the biſhoprics in the reign of Edward VI. was certainly a moſt unworthy conceſſion; and the commiſſion taken out by Cranmer, Bonner, and others (whoever ſet the example), which admitted the derivation of all juriſdiction, both eccleſiaſtical and civil, from the king, to be exerciſed at his precarious pleaſure, have been juſtly ſtigmatized, notwithſtanding the tardy admiſſion of other things of divine right. Cranmer's Eraſtian ſentiments, however, were ſoon relinquiſhed; and it was well underſtood in Elizabeth's reign, if not before, that the epiſcopal character was not derived from, or alienable by, the civil power; for when Parker was conſecrated Archbiſhop, upon a queſtion of the competency of the Biſhops to conſecrate, as they had been legally deprived in the late reign, it was determined that, as they had been once conſecrated, the epiſcopal character remained, and they might convey it. See Neal, Vol. I. c. 4.

pointed

pointed rulers were reverenced *. Their miniſterial functions, their appropriate powers of ordaining, inſtituting, confirming, conſecrating, and conferring of ſpiritual authority, though transferred from the Pope to the Biſhops, and ordinaries †, the rightful claimants of it, were fully acknowledged. Their juriſdiction, purely ſpiritual, was preſerved uninjured ‡, though their eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, affecting civil intereſts, was to be ex-

* Mr. Plowden, after a full inveſtigation of the ſubject, has obſerved, that, if we take the whole of the circumſtances under our conſideration, and examine attentively and impartially the laws reſpecting this ſubject, we ſhall find that they are emphatically grounded on the principle that the ſource of the ſpiritual juriſdiction and Church government is completely out of the competency or power of the civil magiſtrate, Church and State, b. ii. c. 5.

† The mixed power of the Pope reſolved itſelf into the Church and State. The ſpiritual authority, if not in preciſe deſcription, yet in operation, was transferred to the Archbiſhops, Biſhops, &c. over whom the king has a ſuperintendant ſupremacy of reſtraint, and of appeal in concerns of civil intereſt. Hooker, b. viii.

‡ See the 25th Henry VIII. c. 19. The Clergy, in conformity to a ſubmiſſion which they had made, are forbidden to aſſemble without the king's writ, or to attempt any thing, when aſſembled, without the king's licence. The Clergy have certainly a tranſmitted right to exerciſe a juriſdiction, merely ſpiritual, independently of the civil power; but they can have no coactive power to enforce their deciſions, however binding on the conſcience, till accepted by the ſtate; and when in alliance with the ſtate, they with propriety conſent that their eccleſiaſtical meetings and deliberations ſhould be ſuggeſted and ſanctioned by the civil governor.

erciſed only in conformity to ſtated regulations; with conſent of the civil governor; with deference to the laws, ſtatutes, and cuſtoms of the country; and was to be entitled to no coercive impoſition on the Laity till ratified by the acceptance of the ſtate, formally expreſſed by its repreſentatives *.

The eccleſiaſtical Canons, as they had been framed partly with the aſſumption of temporal power, were ſubjected to a reviſal; and, as far as they had a civil aſpect, were to reſt their validity on the civil ratification †. The eccleſiaſtical courts, reſtricted in their cognizance and proceedings, in ſubordination to a controlling juriſdiction, as to concerns of preſent intereſt, were gradually improved into eſtabliſhments of diſtinguiſhed equity ‡.

Thus

* The Clergy, though legitimate interpreters of Chriſt's will, have no infallibility; and the Laity muſt judge of the conſiſtency of their decrees with the revealed law; muſt ſignify their acceptance of them before they can be ſubjected to their temporal effect.

† See 25th Hen. VIII. c. 19. 1 Eliz. c. 1. on which depended the authority of the Legatine and Provincial Conſtitutions. The Canons enacted by the Clergy in the reign of James I. as not confirmed by Parliament, have been declared to be not obligatory on the Laity, except where they are explanatory of the ancient Canon law, whatever reſpect they are entitled to from the Clergy. Blackſtone's Introd.

‡ By the alterations which took place at the Reformation, and ſince, eſpecially by ſtatute 13 Car. II. c. 12. the eccleſiaſtical

Thus eſtimated, the genuine rights and legitimate claims of the Church have been found not only to be compatible with the rights and authority of the ſtate, but favourable to the advancement of its higheſt intereſts. The diſtinct characters of the two juriſdictions were practically marked out *, however ſince they may have been theoretically confounded. The repugnancies and claſhing claims of diſcordant powers were henceforth to ceaſe. If the lines of their reſpective operations ſhould approach, it would

tical courts, which were formerly ſtigmatized for partiality and arbitrary proceedings, are become celebrated for moderation and equity. "It muſt be acknowledged," ſays Sir William Blackſtone, "to the honour of the ſpiritual courts, that though "they continue to this day to decide many queſtions which "are properly of temporal cognizance, yet juſtice is in gene-"ral ſo ably and impartially adminiſtered in thoſe tribunals, "eſpecially of the ſuperior kind, and the boundaries of their "power are now ſo well known and eſtabliſhed, that no ma-"terial inconvenience at preſent ariſes from this juriſdiction "ſtill continuing in the antient channel; and ſhould an alte-"ration be attempted, great confuſion would probably ariſe "in overturning long eſtabliſhed forms, and in new model-"ling a courſe of proceedings that has now prevailed for ſeveral "centuries." Blackſtone's Com. b. iii. c. 7.

* Mr. Plowden maintains, that the acts of Parliament in the 13th and 14th centuries, upon the rights and franchiſes of the Church of England, exactly and forcibly diſtinguiſhed the true line of demarcation between the ſpiritual and temporal powers. It is certain however that they were very inſufficient barriers againſt the Papal encroachments: and nothing but the final rejection of the foreign ſupremacy could perfectly diſſever the two powers.

be

be in the concurrence of ſimilar deſigns; and the ſacred wheels of religion were to roll on in harmony with thoſe of civil government.

The members of a ſpiritual kingdom were now, no more to raiſe themſelves in the confidence of impunity, with pretenſions hoſtile to the power by which they were protected; or to harraſs and diſtract the ſubjects of their ſovereign with a double ſervice, by holding out duties inconſiſtent with civil allegiance. They were no more to cheriſh, with affections alienated by a foreign reſidence, any views inconſiſtent with the intereſt of the country. Detached by no diſtant ties, biaſſed by no remote objects *, they could not but adhere with grateful fidelity to the welfare of the ſtate; and in the attachment of a conſcientious obedience call forth the energies of religion to invigorate the influence of lawful government. Limited to the defined endowments of ancient appointment, hereafter to be augmented by no fraudulent arts, they ceaſed to provoke envy by exorbitant

* It is well known how much the ambitious views of Wolſey influenced Henry and his kingdom, and how injuriouſly to their intereſts an artful favourite led his ſovereign to form or to break connections, to declare for war or peace, as the projects for the Popedom varied.

wealth,

wealth, or to excite jealouſy by unreaſonable power.

The laſt advantage which is ſtated to have reſulted to ſociety from the rejection of the Papal control, was the reſtoration of the Miniſtry to the legitimate object of its profeſſion—the eſtabliſhment of truth. The appointed advocates of divine wiſdom, when not overawed by a pretended infallibility, ventured to remove that veil which had concealed the deformity of error. Liberated from the ſervice of an earthly maſter, they were left to obey the inſtructions of their heavenly Lord. Releaſed from ſubjection to the bondage impoſed by accumulated traditions, and the erroneous decrees of human policy, they were encouraged to inveſtigate truth only at its ſacred ſource; and its deductions could not but flow with a beneficial courſe, when reaſon, unfettered by prejudice, laboured with ſincerity to clear its ſtreams.

The enlightened rulers of the Church were the guides who took the lead in every meaſure of a temperate and ſober change. Their becoming praiſe it was, to ſuggeſt the council, and their honourable diſtinction, to mature the work. Members of the ſacred order were thoſe,

thoſe, who, forſaking the corruptions of a depraved faith, proclaimed with zealous alacrity the genuine doctrines of Revelation. Strenuous advocates for advancing truth, they ſtood forth the champions of its controverted points. Their judicious expoſition detailed its evidence; their eloquent vindications enforced its arguments with reſiſtleſs demonſtration. At every ſtep ſome worldly intereſt was ſacrificed; ſome lucrative ſuperſtition diſclaimed. Anxious only for the eſtabliſhment of a pure faith, they diſregarded conſiderations of preſent profit. The ſainted image was broken in pieces, and the venerated relic trodden under foot, at the ſuggeſtion of thoſe whoſe revenues had been ſwelled by the devotion of their credulous and miſguided votaries, but who no longer wiſhed to promote earthly objects by religion, or to "corrupt the Word of God for gain." The impoſture of fictitious miracles was expoſed, and the fallacy of human interceſſions and indulgences decried * by thoſe who, had they conſulted ſecular advantage, would have laboured, as did many intereſted men, to ſecure their continued influence.

* Acts, 22d article.

None

None were more eager than the Clergy, who had thrown off the bandage of a blind reverence to the Papal ſee, to acknowledge the enormity of thoſe evils which had ſo long prevailed; none were more ready with indignant warmth to reprobate the pretended converſion of the ſacred elements, the denial of the cup to the Laity, the efficacy of operated maſſes, the abuſes of auricular confeſſion, the burthen of multiplied ſacraments. Leſs ſincere advocates for truth would have ſought to check that ardour, which ruſhed forward but to ſhare the pillage and alienated poſſeſſions of the Church; and to repreſs a ſpirit which too evidently betrayed, under the pretended zeal of reform, the ſchemes of innovation, and the deſigns of ſelf-intereſt; but, anxious for the promotion of important principles, they looked only to the confirmation of them, and truſted that the temple of a purified faith would exhibit ſufficient of the majeſty, and inviolable ſanctity of true religion, to awe and repel the invaſion of ſacrilegious men, and that "He that dwelleth "in heaven would have his eye upon it and "defend it *."

* 2 Maccabb. ch. iii.

From

From the period of the firſt reſtoration of ſacred wiſdom, its laws have been maintained by the ſucceſſors of theſe diſtinguiſhed men with ſimilar and unrelaxing ſpirit; and every change in the progreſſive work of Reformation has been deſigned but to advance the principles, and promote the influence of religion.

By the members of an enlightened Miniſtry have the inſpired oracles of the faith been anxiouſly ſtudied and patiently explained; by their reſearches have the ſcattered documents of revelation been ſought out and compared; by their induſtry likewiſe have the precepts of truth been circulated, and the elements of inſtruction diffuſed through every rank, till timid and erroneous policy would reſtrain the liberal exertion. By them has the cauſe of Chriſtianity been eſtabliſhed on a baſis from which it cannot be removed, while that word which paſſeth not away ſhall continue to be publiſhed with every teſtimony of external evidence, and every illuſtration of human learning. The labours which have diſcloſed the accompliſhment of prophecy, which have vindicated the truth of miracles, and brought forward

ward the beauty and consistency of revealed doctrines, have inscribed their deductions on monuments that can fall but with the decay of science, and be buried only in the general ruins of literature and knowledge.

SERMON

SERMON III.

JOHN xviii. 36.

Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world.

THE promiſes held out by Chriſt to his Diſciples, were not thoſe of temporal proſperity. The ſervants who were to atteſt their zeal in the cauſe of a Maſter that had been wounded in the fleſh, were to "arm "themſelves with the ſame mind" to "take up "the croſs," and to ſhew the firmneſs and fidelity of their attachment in trials and ſufferings. Unwilling to ſtir up paſſions ever ready to kindle, and deſirous rather of animating his followers, even to a determined and eſtimated diſregard of life, and its deareſt intereſts, our Redeemer predicted to them only ſuch bleſſings as through perſecution were to be obtained. With denunciations of peril, and

rejection and hatred from men, were conveyed no intermingled encouragements from the proſpect of the conciliation of earthly favour. The Apoſtles and their early converts neither expected nor experienced the ſmiles of that friendſhip which was "at enmity "with God." Taking the prophets who had ſpoken in the name of the Lord, "for an "example of ſuffering affliction, and of pati-"ence," and "counting them happy which "endured," conſidering themſelves as it were "appointed to death *," they put on "the "whole armour of God, having their loins "girt about with truth, and having on the "breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs, that they "might be able to withſtand in the evil "day †."

The virtues by which they were to illuſtrate the tendency of their religion, different as they were from the vain-glorious qualities which the Heathen world had been accuſtomed to admire, were to exhibit their higheſt excellency amidſt ſcenes of ſorrow and diſtreſs; and the integrity of the Chriſtian faith was diſplayed with peculiar luſtre amidſt the mockeries and perſecution which it ſuſtained.

* James, ch. v. ver. 10, 11. 1 Cor. ch. iv. ver. 9.
† Epheſ. ch. vi. ver. 11—18.

In

In reflecting on the diſtinguiſhed and impreſſive character of the Primitive Church, compared with the faded features of its glory in later times, the proſperity which ſucceeded its days of affliction has been juſtly mentioned amidſt the many cauſes which contributed to the corruption of its principles *. From ſuch repreſentation, however, it ſhould not haſtily be concluded, that the decay of Chriſtianity was immediately and univerſally the effect of that earthly favour which naturally ſhone upon it, when accepted and countenanced by the opulent and powerful; nor ſhould it be forgotten, that, amidſt the ſplendour of its exaltation, the ſincerity of its faith was preſerved in many ſignal inſtances, "refuſing to live in the "fleſh to the luſts of men." A religion, accommodated to the condition of mankind, was deſigned to reſiſt the allurements of ſeduction, as well as the threats of terror; and no inconſiderable part of its inſtruction was directed to the preſervation of rectitude, amidſt circumſtances of cheerful and exhilarating character.

If Chriſt, for obvious and important reaſons, did not directly unfold in his predictions

* See preceding Diſcourſe.

the elevation and temporal glory which were to dignify his Church, ſtill was its eſtabliſhment under earthly protection evidently in the contemplation of the divine ſcheme, as revealed in the aſſurances of ancient prophecy, and implied in the general declarations of Chriſt, as to the advancement and univerſal reception of the Goſpel. When David, ſpeaking of Chriſt under his type, foretold that all kings "ſhould fall down "before him," all nations ſhould "ſerve "him*;" when Iſaiah predicted "of the "Holy One whom man deſpiſed, whom the "nation abhorred, the ſervant of rulers," that "kings ſhould ſee and ariſe, princes alſo "ſhould worſhip," and that when the ſtandard of Chriſt's Church ſhould be ſet up among the Gentiles, "kings ſhould be its "nurſing fathers, and their queens its nurſing "mothers," that they ſhould "bow down "with their face toward the earth, and lick "up the duſt" of Chriſt's feet†; that the Gentiles ſhould "come to his light," and "kings to the brightneſs of his riſing;" that "the ſons of ſtrangers ſhould build the "walls" of the Church; that it ſhould

* Pſalm lxxii. ver. 11. Pſalm cii. ver. 15, 16. Pſalm cxxxviii. Pſalm cxlviii. ver. 11.

† Iſaiah, ch. xlix. ver. 7, 22, 23.

"ſuck

" ſuck the milk of the Gentiles, and the " breaſt of kings *." In theſe and ſimilar deſcriptions were conveyed ſurely ſome intimations of an earthly proſperity, which ſhould accompany the orient beams of the Church, and contribute in the firſt ages, as well as at its concluding period, to the manifeſtation of its glory to the Gentile nations of the earth; and it cannot but be underſtood that the proſtration of the Eaſtern ſages, who with perſonal worſhip preſented rich offerings to the infant humility of Jeſus, was but a partial figure of that reverence with which the ſovereigns of the earth were to bow down to the lowly condition of the kingdom which he ſhould eſtabliſh with a ſmall beginning.

The obligations impoſed on the nations and potentates of the earth, in their collective and ſovereign character, to adopt Chriſtianity, and to promote its advancement, were not urged by Chriſt and his Apoſtles with ſpecific injunction, ſince they were to be collected with ſufficient evidence from the general tendency of the ſacred inſtructions; and ſince

* Iſaiah, ch. lx. ver. 3—16. See alſo ch. lxii. ver. 2. and Revelations, ch. vii. which Sir Iſaac Newton applies to the exaltation of the Church by Conſtantine, Vol. III. p. 74—77, as cited by Dr. Eveleigh. See alſo Lowman on the Revelation.

a direct invocation on temporal ſovereignties would have diſcouraged the confidence of thoſe who depended on inviſible aid, and who in no reſpect appear to have leaned on the reed of earthly ſupport, till Chriſtianity was erected with extenſive dominion.

The exiſtence of ſuch obligations, however, may be demonſtrated by a repreſentation of the actual conſtitution of civil ſociety, and of the concluſions which are to be drawn from revelation and reaſon, as to its deſign and duties. In connection with which deſcription it is purpoſed to ſhew, that the evils, which have been ſtated to reſult from the adoption of religion by the temporal power, do not neceſſarily ariſe from, or counterbalance, the advantages which may be derived from its eſtabliſhment; and in concluſion to furniſh, in continuation of our general ſubject, an expoſition of the principles on which its civil appointment is maintained, in conſiſtency with the deſign of the Reformation in this country.

If, without a view to model forms of polity on the Patriarchal ſcheme, we would collect the duties of the civil governor from the firſt inſtitution of ſociety, we ſhould be compelled to reject thoſe vague and conjectural

ſpeculations

ſpeculations which repreſent men to have united in ſocial compact with the limited views of protection and ſecurity; and confining our attention to authentic and indiſputable records, ſhould conſider communities as at firſt compoſed of the acknowledged dependants of the Supreme God; religious families multiplied into religious tribes, cohering in the union of every intereſt, for the promotion of the general welfare, the advancement of the general happineſs, the celebration of the general worſhip. Uniting in his own perſon the ſovereign and the prieſtly character *, the father of the family, the patriarch of the tribe, the founder of the city, or the leader of the colony, was favoured by God, in proportion as he countenanced and promoted the cauſe of true religion.

Under the diſpenſation delivered by Moſes, civil and eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction were for ſome time at leaſt united in the ſame perſons; acting indeed as the immediate miniſters of God, and communicating in mingled inſtruction the political and religious precepts which were calculated for the government of

* Omnibus his niveâ cinguntur tempora vittâ.
Æneid VI.

a peculiar people *. From the conſtitution of a ſingular œconomy, ſubject to the eſpecial ſuperintendency of God, and directed by deputed ſervants, to whom his revelations were directly conveyed, and who acted under the power and teſtimonies of a miraculous commiſſion, we are not authoriſed to argue beyond the concluſions which may be drawn from ſtrict analogy, and the application of ſuch principles as are evidently deducible from a contemplation of divine appointments, deſcribed "for our learning †;" and which, in caſes not diſſimilar, muſt be allowed to be impreſſive precedents. In ſtrict conſiſtency, however, with this reſerve, it is juſt to maintain that the commendation and favour beſtowed on thoſe righteous princes, who, when the civil and religious departments were diſſevered by the eſtabliſhment of the kingly government, continued to guard and advance the intereſts of religion, may be urged to recommend an imitation of their example.

When the Church of Chriſt was ſet up as a kingdom, to be enlarged by uncon-

* As in the caſe of Moſes, Joſhua, the Judges, Prophets, and Sanhedrim.

† Rom. ch. xv. ver. 4.

ſtrained

ſtrained aſſociation for ſpiritual purpoſes, it was ſubjected by its divine Founder and his Apoſtles only to ſpiritual authority. It was erected with no ordinances that could interfere with dominions already conſtituted, and with no regimen but what might conſiſt with, and derive countenance from, exiſting powers.

The three orders eſtabliſhed in conformity to apoſtolical appointment and directions, and claſſed after the departure of the Apoſtles under the appropriate titles of Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons *, were inſtituted with ſubordination eſſential to good government, and with that propriety of regulation which requires ſuperior qualifications for the ſuperior adminiſtrations of religion. A regimen

* The primitive diſtinction and ſuperiority of the epiſcopal order appears to be fully demonſtrated by the prerogatives and juriſdiction which the Biſhops exerciſed over the Preſbytery; by their excluſive adminiſtrations, as eſpecially that of ordaining; by the ſpecific enumeration of the three orders as eſſential, and by the deſcription of their appropriate offices in the earlieſt writers. The appointment was apoſtolical; and the records of many Churches exhibit in their firſt Biſhops the names of perſons ordained by the Apoſtles, beſides Titus and Timothy. See the Epiſtles of Ignatius, paſſim; Irenæus, l. iii. c. 14. l. iv. c. 63; Tertull. adv. Marcion. l. iv. c. 5. He attributes the inſtitution to St. John, Euſeb. l. iii. c. 23. Hieron. Epiſt. lxxxv. ad Evag. Bingham. Antiq. b. ii. ch. 2.

adjuſted

adjuſted by inſpired perſons, cannot but be conſidered as of divine inſtitution; and however the ſervice of the Church might have varied in its lower departments *, on the extenſion of its empire, the three principal diſtinctions of order, marked out with appropriation of peculiar functions, and with the aſſignment of eſpecial rights of juriſdiction, in connection with Chriſt's promiſes, and confirmed by the arrangements and ſanctions of the firſt ages, claimed a title to the permanent governance of the Church, and had a right to expect temporal homage and civil ſupport. The admirable diſcipline of the primitive times, moulded in obedience to this conſtitution, had exhibited at leaſt the excellency of the model, and the obligations of conforming to a pattern, which could not but be reverenced.

As the boundaries of the Church were enlarged, embracing diſtricts, provinces, and kingdoms, in their extended pale, the ſtates

* As with reſpect to the prophets of the New Teſtament, who interpreted the Scriptures, and cenſured the diſobedient; the Deaconneſs of the Eaſtern Church, and other inferior Miniſters, as Subdeacons, Acolyths, Exorciſts, &c. 1 Cor. c. xiv. ver. 29. Bingham, l. ii. c. 20.

and

and civil communities which they encloſed were naturally led to countenance, by general regulations, an œconomy which, in collective acceptance, they approved; and which diſplayed no appointments of permanent and irreverſible deſcription, but what were capable of combining with every ſyſtem, in which regularity and order ſubſiſted.

The Evangelical government, in ſpreading over the provinces of the Roman world, had naturally regulated its external frame in conformity to the allotments of the ſeveral diſtricts of that empire *; and no farther affected the ſecular dominion, than, as by controlling the paſſions, and guiding the minds of men, it rendered them peaceable ſubjects, and called forth virtues which conſpired with the real intereſts of ſociety.

* In the firſt period of Chriſtianity each Greek and Roman city, with its ſuburbicary territory, was under the government of certain magiſtrates appointed from its own body, who compoſed a council or ſenate, ſubject to one chief, ſtyled Dictator, or Defenſor Civitatis; in ſuperinduction upon which, the Apoſtles, or at leaſt the early Preachers of the Goſpel, erected in every ſuch diſtrict a Preſbytery, with a Preſident, Apoſtle, or Biſhop, or Angel of the Church, whoſe power reached over the whole dioceſe, which was often of very conſiderable extent, and commenſurate with the civil juriſdiction. Titus, ch. i. ver. 5. Concil. Antioch. ix. Theodoret, Epiſt. xlii. & cxiii. unjuſtly ſuſpected

ciety. It was the excellency of its character, and the teſtimonies of its truth, which recommended it to the acceptance of mankind; and as its influence ſpread, the ſovereign and the legiſlator adopted it under their care, and ſupported it by their authority.

That the Heathen Emperors, to whom Chriſtianity was preſented, with its due evidence, were called upon by every religious conſideration, not only to bow to it themſelves as to a divine revelation, but to promote, by proper meaſures and temperate exertions, its general acceptance, cannot reaſonably be diſputed. Converts to the truth and univerſal importance of that religion, they were expected, as ſervants of the God

ſuſpected Auguſt. Epiſt. lxviii. edit. Frob. Gregor. Naz. Car. de Vit. The metropolitan biſhoprics were eſtabliſhed in the primacy of provincial towns, for central advantage and confederate government. On the new diviſion under Conſtantine, the patriarchal ſupremacy roſe, in correſpondence with the new conſtitution of the different provinces united under one Eparch, Vicar or Prefect. See Bingham's Eccleſ. Antiq. b. ii. ch. i. Petrus de Marca de Concord. Sacerd. & Imper. l. vi. c. 1. When new diſtributions of the provinces were made by ſucceeding Emperors, it was ſometimes provided that the eccleſiaſtical allotments ſhould not be affected, as in the time of Juſtinian as to Armenia. Quæ ad ſacerdotia ſpectant volumus in eadem manere forma. Novat. xxxi. c. 2. See Maurice's Defence of Dioceſan Epiſcopacy.

whom

whom they were to obey *; as disciples of the faith into which they were baptized; as rulers of the people whose welfare they were to consult, to consecrate such power of countenance and protection as they might consistently exercise, to its extensive promulgation. It was only when they exerted co-

* See Ps. ii. ver. 11; upon which we may remark with St. Austin, without adopting his intolerant sentiments, that kings are required to serve the Lord by a peculiar service in their sovereign character, as did Hezekiah. Vid. Ep. 1. ad Bonifac. "If "all Christians (says Thorndyke, speaking of Constantine) by "their baptism do consecrate themselves to the service of God in "his Church, then must he also, by being baptized, consecrate "the power of the empire to the maintenance of that Christianity "into which he was baptized." The succeeding sentiments are not equally just. See Preface to just Weights and Measures. Barrow argues on the position that every prince is obliged to employ the power entrusted to him to the furtherance of God's service. See Treatise on Pope's Supremacy, Suppositi. v. And the composers of a part of our Liturgy were of the same opinion; since the following passage is in the beginning of a prayer in the Communion Service for the 25th of October: "Blessed "Lord, who hast called Christian princes to the defence of thy "faith, and hast made it their duty to promote the spiritual "welfare, together with the temporal interest of their peo-"ple." These principles do not militate against any just maxims of toleration, or affect the chief arguments which Mr. Locke deemed it necessary, with such diffusive repetition, to urge against the strange notions of his opponent, that force should be employed to compel people to think and examine; as far as those arguments relate to the imposition of articles of faith and forms of worship. The obligations which bind the magistrate, bind him only, to measures compatible with the spirit of religion and the welfare of society. If by the magistrate we understand the executive power, it should be exercised in religious matters only for the preservation of regulations enacted by the state, and not for the enforcing of the establishment of them.

ercive

ercive and perſecuting authority, that they erred; ſince theſe were inconſiſtent with the intereſts of the ſociety, and in violation of the inſtructions of religion, and were not indeed calculated to promote the cauſe of that God who is to be worſhipped in ſincerity, but to extort a feigned and ſpurious profeſſion of faith *.

Upon the ſame principles, of a duty preſſing with peculiar force on the ſovereign, "of "ſtrengthening others" when converted, will the temporal princes of the earth be univerſally pledged, on the acceptance of Chriſtianity, to contribute, by ſuitable endeavours, to the general eſtabliſhment of that religion among their ſubjects. The theories which have tended to reſtrict the views, and to narrow the

* St. Auſtin, in his Epiſtle to Vincentius, informs us, that, though he had been averſe to coercive meaſures, he had been led to change his opinion, when it was urged to him, that his own city, which had conſiſted only of Donatiſts, had been brought to Catholic union by the terror of the Imperial laws: that is, to a nominal profeſſion of orthodoxy. It muſt be lamented, that a principle ſo deteſtable and pregnant with miſchief ſhould derive any countenance from the authority of this pious writer. Epiſt. xlviii. Whatever indirect or accidental converſions may have accrued from compulſive conformity, they will furniſh no ſufficient apology for the exertion of a coercive power. The Chriſtian emperors were unhappily led to intolerance, in ſubverting the complicated intereſts of the Pagan religion, which were interwoven with all the civil regulations of ſociety. Chriſtianity however ſufficiently expoſed the abſurdity of the Heathen theology; and its temples might have been left to mouldér into ruins by neglect.

duties

duties of the governors of ſociety, have been limited by the contemplation of the civil magiſtrate in his abſtract character, without regard to that relation in which he ſtands towards God, or attention to the exiſtence of any powers but thoſe of coercion *. The duties which expand from that relation embrace the whole intereſts of the community, temporal and ſpiritual; and though with neceſſary diſtinction it muſt be admitted, that the peculiar and appropriate province of the civil power is confined to the preſent regulation of ſociety; yet, to prevent the ſuppreſſion of religious conſiderations, it muſt be remembered, that the civil power cannot exiſt in real life in any perſons who are free from

* It muſt be obſerved, that this diſcuſſion originates only in a deſire to vindicate the motives that ſhould operate to the acceptance of Chriſtianity. It is admitted, that the civil magiſtrate, abſtractedly conſidered, ſhould not interfere; that coercive powers ſhould not be exerted: but we muſt not therefore conclude that the civil magiſtrate, as repreſenting the governors of ſociety or the ſtate, is not bounden to ſupport the real intereſts of religion; a notion which ſeems inſenſibly to have prevailed, from the incautious manner in which the term civil magiſtrate has been employed, and which, while it was well deſigned to diſcountenance intolerance and compulſion in religious matters, has appeared to reſolve all concern for religion into the apathy or indifference of ſtate policy. The arguments employed by Biſhop Warburton to invalidate this obligation, apply only to the magiſtrate in his abſtract executive character, as acting without the conſent of the majority of the community. See his Treatiſe on the Teſt Law, Divin. Legat. b. iii.

ſacred

ſacred obligations, to facilitate the advancement and influence of religion, by ſuch advantages as they may lawfully employ, in conſiſtency with their delegated truſt, and the intereſts of the community.

It may tend to accuracy of conception, and agreement of opinion upon this ſubject, if, adopting the term of civil magiſtrate as expreſſive of the civil power, we repreſent it under two points of view, in order to illuſtrate the duties which attach to it under each character.

The civil magiſtrate, conſidered as an abſolute ſovereign, may be ſtated, in conformity with the preceding remarks, as bounden, on the acceptance of Chriſtianity, to promote the publication of it in his own dominions, by maintaining and protecting its miniſters. He is not authoriſed to enforce its propagation by the ſword, which falſehood and impoſture have wielded, or by violence of any kind; nor even to eſtabliſh it as the national religion, with civil ſanctions and endowments, till accepted by a predominant and reſpectable part of his ſubjects *.

If,

* Biſhop Warburton ſays, that no particular ſcheme or mode of religion is under the care of the magiſtrate, as magiſtrate, till he has compacted for the purpoſe. Alliance, p. 41. Certainly no form

If, under a ſecond point of view, we conſider the civil magiſtrate as the repreſentative of the community, expreſſing the will and acting by the powers of the State, he is unqueſtionably called upon by revelation, to accept Chriſtianity; to erect it with formal ratification and public inſtitutions; to provide for its miniſters with competent maintenance, and to preſerve its eſtabliſhment by arrangements adapted to its character, and conſiſtent with the general welfare of his ſubjects.

Admitting, as we may do, the diſtinct and peculiar deſign of religion as to the principal object of its care; allowing that its juriſdiction reſpects the ſoul, and aims at the re-

form of eſtabliſhment is properly within his province till adopted by the State. The State is bounden by obligations to God to accept of that form which it conceives to be moſt conſiſtent with the promotion of truth, and the maintenance of religion; but the civil magiſtrate can have no arbitrary right to impoſe his own ſyſtem. Charles the Firſt could not have been blamed for propoſing and recommending the eſtabliſhment of epiſcopacy to Scotland, if he had confined himſelf to the experiment of its being approved by the nation. He offended as much againſt religion as policy, when he perſiſted in endeavours to eſtabliſh it in oppoſition to the determined ſentiments of his ſubjects in that country. However the ſovereign may heſitate at accepting the guardianſhip of a ſyſtem which he individually diſapproves, he certainly muſt maintain a delegated truſt upon the principles to which he is pledged; a rule, by departure from which James the Second juſtly loſt his kingdom, and by the obſervance of which the king of England governs Scotland and Canada.

gulation of the body, only ſo far as the ſoul is concerned; admitting alſo, that the civil power, in its abſtract deſcription, is reſtricted in the exerciſe of its authority to the direction of the external conduct of men, we ſtill may maintain an univerſal obligation on the community, and on the governor repreſenting the ſenſe of the majority of that community, to adopt and ſupport religion, as a law revealed by a Supreme Being *. The reſult of which will be an union or alliance of two powers, both emanating from a Divine ſource; both originally exerciſed by the ſame perſons; both conſpiring in ſome general views; and both

* Mr. Plowden, who in his late publication fairly aſcertains the general line of diſcrimination between the temporal and ſpiritual powers, appears to maintain exceptionable poſitions, when he aſſerts that the duties of the civil magiſtrate were not altered by the communication of Chriſtianity; and that they are ſuch only as the light and law of nature will inſtruct and enable him to perform. The magiſtrate is certainly as much bounden to reſpect the laws of revelation as thoſe of nature; and their tendency to promote the welfare of ſociety is equally ſtrong. The civil power indeed is not authoriſed to control the conſcience, by impoſing Divine revelation or dogmatical opinions; but neither is it authoriſed to enforce the acceptance of many principles of the law of nature. The magiſtrate is bound to reverence and promote the obſervance of the laws both of nature and revelation, by exertions conſiſtent with their ſpirit; not to enforce the ſpeculative principles of either, by coaction, though to check and puniſh external violation of them, where they affect the welfare of ſociety. See Church and State, b. i. c. 7.

capable,

capable, while they preſerve their reſpective limits, of promoting the preſent welfare of mankind; extending their protection over ſociety, like the cherubim which overſpread the Mercy-ſeat of the Tabernacle; their faces looking one to another, and ſtretching out their golden wings till they join at their extremities *.

The neceſſity for this union does not originate, in the firſt inſtance, from the conſideration of the conveniences and mutual benefit which muſt reſult from the compact, but from the religious duty which applies to ſociety, to receive a Goſpel committed to all; a duty preſſing on the aggregate body with collective effect, upon the ſame principles as thoſe with which it bears upon the individual; ſince nothing can diſpenſe the community at large from an obligation by which every member compoſing that community is bounden; and ſince "the nation and kingdom that will not ſerve" Chriſt "ſhall periſh, and be utterly waſted †."

The bleſſings which ariſe from the connection, are bleſſings of ineſtimable value.

* 1 Kings, ch. vi. ver. 27, 28.
† Iſaiah, ch. lx. ver. 12.

They are ſubjects of cheerful reflection, and ſhould tend to ſtrengthen the relation, and to endear the tie; but they are not the primary arguments and inducements to the formation of it. The theories therefore, which are deſigned to ſhew the neceſſity and equity of an eſtabliſhed religion, from the eſſence and end of civil ſociety, and upon the fundamental principles merely of the law of nature and nations, however they may demonſtrate ſuch neceſſity and equity, do not avail themſelves of the higheſt ground *. They debaſe the motives of adoption, and repreſent religion as an engine to be ſubjected to the employment of ſtate-policy. They ſubvert the proper

* Warburton, in his ingenious work of the Alliance, in which criticiſm, undeterred by the deciſions of partial friendſhip, has diſcovered much falſe and inconſiſtent argument, ſeems fundamentally to have erred, by repreſenting what are *the effects* of an union between Church and State, to have been the *original and only motives* for its formation, and by reaſoning upon the abſtract idea of a ſtate with no conſideration of it as it exiſts: a ſociety of perſons whoſe religious duties cannot be ſuperſeded by a political union. The fiction of an alliance might have been uſefully employed to illuſtrate the advantages which reſult from a connection between Church and State, and the line which ſhould be preſerved by each in the connection; but it ſhould not have been grounded on the aſſertion, that the State is influenced to the conjunction by no motives but thoſe of political expediency: much elaborate reaſoning is built on falſe premiſes, and the learned writer is often betrayed into palpable contradictions.

and

and ſecure foundation on which the arguments for the conjunction ſhould be built; that of the indiſpenſable obligation of accepting a Divine law; a duty to be evaded only upon the preſumption of heſitation as to the evidence of the law which profeſſeth a Divine authority; a preſumption extremely injurious to the authentic and excluſive teſtimonies of Chriſtianity.

It ſhould be farther obſerved, that as the adoption of religion by the State, if it be not abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of the exiſtence and purity of religion, and alſo to the well-being and proſperity of ſociety, is yet extremely conducive to thoſe objects, there is ſufficient ground to urge the duty of the State to promote ſuch adoption: firſt, becauſe, upon the higheſt motives of reverence to God, it is right to contribute to the preſervation of the exiſtence and purity of religion *; and ſecondly, becauſe, upon a ſubordinate conſideration very generally reſpected,

* Warburton maintains, that the alliance between Church and State is neceſſary to preſerve the purity, and even the being of religion, as well as to ſecure the welfare of the State; and yet contends that the only motive which influences the State to promote the preſervation of that being and purity, proceeds from a regard to civil utility, p. 96. note; which is not true, if we conſider the State as a ſociety of perſons bound to obey God's laws.

it is incumbent on the State, or its repreſentative, to promote by all reaſonable means the welfare and happineſs of ſociety on ſolid and permanent principles *.

If the private opinions which have mingled themſelves with the acceptance of the Chriſtian faith, and the intemperate paſſions which have been kindled with the zeal for its eſtabliſhment, have diſgraced the temporal powers which have engaged in the pretended cauſe of religion, they do not invalidate the general

* Warburton, with the alledged countenance of Ariſtotle, from the ſuppoſed origin of civil ſociety, conceives government to have been deſigned only for a remedy againſt evil, and that happineſs was a ſecondary conſideration. Whether it be a firſt or ſecondary conſideration, however, there appears to be no reaſon to diſpute that the preſent object of civilized ſociety is to attain all poſſible good that may be procured on ſure principles. The learned author denies that civil government can enforce the ſanction of rewards; underſtanding by rewards ſuch as are conferred on every one for obſerving the laws of his country. Upon ſimilar ground he might have maintained that government has not the ſanction of puniſhment, becauſe offenders ſometimes eſcape; and he by no means overthrows the poſition, maintained from the time of Solon to the preſent day, that the ſanction of rewards is one pillar of the civil government, agreeably to the repreſentation of St. Paul, whom he quotes partially; ſince the ſacred writer ſtates that governors are ſent by God "for the praiſe of them that do well," equally as for the "puniſhment of evil doers;" and gives no countenance, in the miſapplied text from 1 Timothy, ch. i. ver. 9. to Warburton's confined views of the end of civil government. Ergo hæc reſpublica cenſetur bona quæ tota collimat, intentaque eſt in utilitatem civium, quo felicem vitam degere queant. Cornel. Bertram. Præf. ad Rem. Ebræor.

poſition,

poſition, that the State is bound to adopt Chriſtianity, and that the temporal powers are bound to countenance it, by regulations conſiſtent with its temperate deſign—to promote, not to impoſe its acceptance. The principle muſt not be ſacrificed, though abuſes may have reſulted from the aſſumption of it, without the qualifications which define its limits. In its reſtricted application it can give no ſanction to intolerance*; but, on the contrary, tends to regulate a conviction, which cannot be deſtroyed, and which ever has, and ever will operate on the conſcience of thoſe who act under religious impreſſions, and upon the ſuppoſition of the energy of which our legiſlature has uniformly contrived its teſts and excluſions.

From the obligation thus ſtated, as binding on the ſovereign, or the community to adopt

* Warburton profeſſes to expoſe the abſurd reaſoning of thoſe, who, thinking an eſtabliſhment to be of Divine right, defend it on the doctrine of intolerance: but it does not appear that more ſanction is given to intolerance by thoſe who aſſert the neceſſity of an eſtabliſhed religion from motives of religious conſideration, than by thoſe who maintain that neceſſity from the eſſence and end of civil ſociety, upon fundamental principles of natural religion; repreſenting doctrines which relate to the being of God, his providence, and the natural and eſſential difference between moral good and evil, to be within the province of the magiſtrate. The motives for

adopt religion, and to promote its influence, reſults the propriety of its eſtabliſhment with national ſanctions; and with ſuch appointments for its diſcipline and ſervice, as are congenial to its ſpirit, and calculated to advance its deſign. Its inſtitutions, erected on the preſumption of the concurrence of the majority, or repreſentative body of the State, are properly protected by the care of the civil magiſtrate; though every coercive power, which on received principles of toleration he is entitled to exerciſe, muſt reſult from the manifeſt neceſſity of ſupporting the public regulations which the legiſlature has approved; and ſhould be reſtricted in its exertion by the exact rule of ſuch defenſive operation; and notwithſtanding the civil and ſpiritual powers be in conſequence united in maintenance of the ſyſtem, it is neceſſary, for the honour and deſign of religion, as well as for the peace and happineſs of ſociety, that they ſhould

the adoption of religion, in neither caſe, and perhaps leſs ſo in the former than in the latter, juſtify the ſetting up of, or the maintenance of a national religion upon principles ſubverſive of the peace of ſociety. Rouſſeau, as Mr. Plowden has remarked, with equal encouragement to intolerance, maintained that the ſovereign might inſiſt on the external obſervance of reſpect to the doctrines of one omniſcient and all-provident God, of a future life, and the ſanctity of the ſocial contract.

continue

continue to act as ſtrictly as poſſible in the lines of their reſpective juriſdiction *.

The ſubject exiſting under ſuch eſtabliſhment, is held by every ſocial principle to reverence it at leaſt as the legitimate conſtitution of the country; and though his conſcience ſhould not ſuffer him to conform to the collective deciſion, as to its declarations of faith, or expreſſion of religious ſervice, he can have no right to diſturb its appointments, or to refuſe his contribution to the general allotments for its ſupport †. He muſt neceſſarily forego the advantages which reſult from employments requiring confidence; and has every indulgence compatible with the preſervation of

* Reges ſæcularibus, pontifices ſpiritualibus ordinandis ſeſe impendunt, quamdiu neutra poteſtatum in alienos limites inſiliet, mutuâ concordiâ res Chriſtiana amplificabitur. Marca, lib. ii. c. 1.

† Neal aſſerts, that Hooker's propoſition of the obligation to ſubmit to the eccleſiaſtical laws of the eſtabliſhed Church, into which we are baptized, is inconſiſtent with the principles of the Reformation. Muſt I, ſays this prejudiced and unfair writer, be at Rome a Papiſt? &c. Hooker however did not mean to impoſe a local faith, but to contend for ſubmiſſion to laws ratified by juſt authority. See Hiſt. of Puritans, Vol. I. b. viii. and Eccleſ. Polit. b. vii. Our Saviour, it has been obſerved, paid the civil tribute, of which a part was applied to the ſupport of idolatry; and the Romaniſts are, without intolerance, required to take the oath of allegiance, and to maintain the Proteſtant ſucceſſion.

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the eſtabliſhment, if he be tolerated in the exerciſe of a worſhip ſeparately erected, and be allowed by temperate argument to recommend his opinions.

Where there is no national eſtabliſhment, the peace and ſecurity of government muſt reſult from the multiplicity and equipoiſe of different ſects; ſince every ſect having a decided aſcendency, will naturally endeavour to ſubſtantiate its diſcipline by the reſpectability of public appointments, however in depreſſion it may murmur at the diſtinctions which they muſt occaſion.

Chriſtianity, though it roſe into eſtimation independently of human aid, may reaſonably accept of ſuch ſupport as is furniſhed in conſiſtency with its ſpirit. Proud as it may be of having triumphed by its own vigour, in defiance of earthly frowns, there is no argument that it ſhould reject the countenance of the great. Its native energy once aſcertained, it detracts not from its praiſe, that, when miraculous ſupport was withdrawn, its maintenance and propagation was to be aſſiſted by ſecondary and ordinary means favourable to its proſperity, and affording occaſion for the diſplay of holy reverence and attachment.

The Miniſters of the Goſpel, on the poſi-

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tive declarations of ſacred authority *, may claim ſome ſupport, as the recompence of thoſe ſpiritual labours which they undertake; though they may be content to wave every title to a ſpecific mode of proviſion, but what reſults from an eſtabliſhed poſſeſſion of that proportion which the State hath deliberately approved, upon judicious and important conſiderations, and with deference to an example and precedent of Divine appointment †.

The propriety of an aſſignment on ſome fixed principles cannot but be obvious. In the firſt ardour of inſpired zeal the appointed Apoſtles and delegated ſervants of Chriſt were found ready to engage in the propagation of that faith which they had embraced; and the pious gratitude of thoſe, who reaped the fruits of their ſpiritual induſtry, was equally ready to allot the ſheaves of the earthly harveſt for their ſupport: but when the awful and impreſſive teſtimonies of a Divine commiſſion no longer continued to excite the public veneration, it became neceſſary that more permanent maintenance ſhould be ſupplied than

* Matt. ch. x. ver. 10. Luke, ch. x. ver. 7. 1 Cor. ch. ix. ver. 1—15. Gal. ch. vi. ver. 6. 2 Theſſ. ch. iii. ver. 9. 1 Tim. ch. v. ver. 17, 18.

† See an Eſſay on the Revenues of the Church of England.

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what might be derived from the capricious and fluctuating ſpirit of voluntary benevolence. The Miniſters of the Goſpel could not be expected, in every ſtate of ſociety, to dedicate themſelves to unwearied exertions, if they were to depend merely on gratuitous offerings; and their character muſt have ſunk from independency and rectitude, in proportion as it became neceſſary to comply with prevailing opinions; and to court popular favour for that contribution, which, however liberally and judiciouſly it may be furniſhed in ſmall ſocieties, or by ſects ſtruggling for pre-eminence, can conduce in general but to expoſe religion to the danger of being made ſubſervient to worldly purpoſes.

The motives by which the ſtate is bounden to adopt religion, and to ſupport it by civil ſanction, being thus vindicated, it may be expedient to ſhew that the operation of theſe motives is not neceſſarily productive of prejudice, either to religion or to the ſtate; and that the evils which have been repreſented to flow from the conjunction are either falſely aſcribed to it, or of little importance when viewed in competition with the advantages which muſt be derived from the union.

If, waving all hiſtorical enquiry upon this ſubject,

ſubject, we were to confine our attention to theory, it would be obvious to remark, that what appears to be the natural conſequence of the propagation of Chriſtianity, and agreeable to the deſign of God, as far as we can collect from general reaſoning and attention to his revealed will, could not have any tendency neceſſarily hoſtile to religion or ſociety; and that whatever inconvenience may have ſprung from the alliance, muſt have proceeded from the erroneous principles upon which it was regulated, and can furniſh no juſt argument againſt the general propriety and advantage of a civil eſtabliſhment of religion.

Thoſe who, with avowed or concealed averſion to eſtabliſhments, repreſent the commencement of the decay of Chriſtianity to have been coeval with the time of the adoption of it, with ſecular ſupport by Conſtantine, ſeem not to have adverted to the many cauſes of corruption which had begun to operate previouſly to that period, in a Church built indeed on the virtues of its firſt profeſſors; and make no allowance for thoſe fugitive and evaneſcent circumſtances which overſhadowed diſtant ages; though they have left no aſcertained effects of their malignant influence.

The noxious tares of hereſy were ſown by the enemy, together with the ſcattering of the good ſeed; the chaff of human error was mixed, with the earlieſt gatherings of the Goſpel. Long at leaſt before the time of Conſtantine had the allurements of earthly objects * ſeduced the followers of the croſs, which he erected, it is true, with too dazzling ornaments †. It may be allowed, indeed, that the prodigal munificence with which he decorated the Church, raiſed from dejection; the ſudden ſplendour with which he inveſted the lowly Miniſters, whom he had reſcued from "great tribulation ‡;" the dangerous immunities and privileges § which he and his ſucceſſors

* See preceding Diſcourſe, and particularly Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. viii. c. 1. l. iv. c. 22. l. v. c. 20. as cited by Dr. Eveleigh, and the account of Paul of Samoſata in Euſeb. l. vii. c. 30.

† Euſeb. de Vit. Conſtant. l. i. c. 30. Helena, the mother of Conſtantine, was the firſt who gave riſe to the worſhip of the croſs, which afterwards degenerated into idolatry; by erecting magnificent Churches in honour of the actual croſs of Chriſt, which ſhe profeſſed to have diſcovered at Jeruſalem, in a manner of which Socrates gives an account very remarkable, but, according to the opinion of Lowth, entitled to credit. See alſo Sulpit. Sever. and Jortin, Vol. II. p. 238.

‡ Rev. ch. vii. ver. 14.

§ Conſtantine allowed an appeal from the civil courts to the Biſhops, whoſe ſentence was to be valid, and ſuperior to the decrees of the judges, as much as if it had been pronounced by the Emperor himſelf; and was to be executed by the rulers of the

ſucceſſors conceded to them; the ſources of unreſtrained wealth which were opened*, and the incentives to emulation, which were raiſed by too partial favour, did conſpire to accelerate the influence of corruption. The attraction of imperial patronage, and the terror of the imperial ſceptre †, contributed to multiply the crowds of unworthy and unweaned converts; and the luſtre of that faith which had ſhone brightly in a contracted

the provinces and his officers. The Emperor refuſed to take cognizance of ſome crimes alledged againſt Biſhops, and left them to the judgment of the Clergy. Sozom. Hiſt. l. i. c. 9. Decret. p. ii. Cauſ. 115. q. 1. c. 41. Euſeb. Hiſt. & de Vit. Conſtant.

* It appears that the Chriſtian Miniſters of Conſtantinople had as yet aſſumed no external ſplendour, ſince Euſebius deſcribes the Biſhops, whom Conſtantine wiſhed to raiſe in the eſtimation of the people, as clothed in poor attire, conſiſtently with the accounts of Ammianus Marcellinus, and of Gregory Nazianzen, ſpeaking of himſelf, and St. Baſil. Euſeb. de Vit. Conſtant. l. vi. c. 42. cum notis Valeſ. Edit. Reading. Conſtantine might have confirmed the property before annexed to the Church, and have eſtabliſhed it with liberal appointments, without injury to religion; but he opened flood-gates of evil, when he ſuffered devotion to pour in unlimited treaſures, by unreſtrained grants and teſtamentary bequeſts.

† The Conſtitution of Conſtantine and Licinius, publiſhed at Milan about A. D. 313, conceded a general toleration upon the moſt liberal principles, and attributed the tranquillity then enjoyed, to indulgence. Euſeb. l. x. c. 5. It would have been honourable to the profeſſors of the Goſpel, and happy for the world, if the ſame Chriſtian principles had continued to operate. Vid. Euſeb. in Vit. Conſtant. l. iii. c. 63. Cod. Theod. l. xvi. tit. 10. l. iv. & xii.

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circle, was weakened by diffuſion, and glimmered only with the ſcattered and uncertain rays which it continued, though with diminiſhed glory, to emit. But what argument can thence be drawn againſt ſuch liberal and diſcreet appointments, as may indicate becoming reverence; and ſuch competent and permanent proviſion as may ſecure independency and encouragement to the labourers in a ſpiritual ſervice?

If a proviſion were not made adequate for the ſupport of a Miniſtry, ſufficient as to number to preach to the poor as to the rich, and reſpectable as to qualifications for the attainment of learning, Chriſtianity would inſenſibly ſink into diſregard with the general claſſes of ſociety, and become the ſubject of rare and ſpeculative diſcuſſion. Its complicated evidence, contained in remote records and languages, known only to the inſtructed; its prophecies, interwoven with accounts of ancient hiſtory and its doctrines, deducible from laborious collation, would be conſidered only by the ſtudious in ſilent enquiry; and its inſtructions, deſcriptive of the Divine attributes, and impreſſive of religious obligations, would be admired only in abſtracted contemplation: whereas that evidence, when preſented

preſented with frequent demonſtration to public attention, and thoſe doctrines inculcated in familiar expoſition, bring forward religion to general regard and obſervance. Its inſtitutions, ſet up with national ſanction, are viewed with habitual reverence; its worſhip, expreſſed by exterior acts of celebration, is performed with ſocial concord, and its maxims, imbibed by daily hearing, aſſimilate with the principles of our conduct, and meliorate the character of our thoughts, words, and actions.

If it be ſtated, that indolence is the reſult of ſecurity, and that the exertions of an eſtabliſhed Miniſtry may be deadened in the confidence of protection *, it is an argument deduced from the conſideration of a partial hypotheſis; and to have any weight, muſt ſuppoſe the ſuppreſſion of hoſtility, which ever calls for vigilance, and the diſtribution of ap-

* Hume ſtates the advantage of eſtabliſhment to be, to bribe the indolence of ſpiritual guides, by aſſigning ſtated ſalaries to their profeſſion; and rendering it ſuperfluous to be farther active than merely to prevent their flock from ſtraying in queſt of new paſtures. The ſarcaſtic hiſtorian might have reflected, that activity cannot retain the flock in the old paſtures, unleſs they are preſerved in a ſtate of perfection ſuperior to that of the new. Hiſt. of England, ch. xxix.

pointments ſo equal, as to ſuperſede every ſecular encouragement to emulation. It muſt alſo harſhly ſuppoſe in men, whoſe minds have been awakened to every ſerious motive and ſolemn obligation, an indifference to every conſideration which they have profeſſed. Calculated as is the national eſtabliſhment of ſome approved ſyſtem, to prevent by its ſtability the endleſs vibration of uncertain intereſts, and the mutual intolerance of ſects ruling with tranſient and anxious triumph, it can by no means ſtill the ſtrictures or repreſs the jealous complaints of thoſe who are ever eager to expoſe its defects, and inſult over its unworthy members.

The evils then which have reſulted from the injudicious and extravagant favour beſtowed at different times on the Church, by no means outweigh the great and ſolid advantages which have been urged; and they certainly furniſh no juſt argument againſt a civil eſtabliſhment of religion, as ſupported in agreement with the principles of the Reformation in this country. The excellency of thoſe principles may be vindicated upon the ſtrong and important ground of their tendency to effectuate ſuch advantages in an eminent

eminent degree, from their conſiſtency with the deſign of revelation, and their conformity to the character and diſcipline of the early Church.

It was a favourable effect of the peculiar views of Henry, that, while his reſentment urged him to break down the tower of that uſurpation which had been raiſed above the ſtructure of the Chriſtian Church, he had no wiſh to deſtroy the original form of its edifice. Its principal ſupports were preſerved uninjured; its ancient pillars remained unſhaken. The appointments of that order by which all things in heaven and earth are kept in harmony; which were regulated with ſimple diſtinctions and appropriate functions; and which were endowed with privileges adapted to the genius of our conſtitution, continued to conſolidate the well-compacted frame of ſpiritual and civil government. Monaſtic inſtitutions and their dependencies, the prime intention and ancient utility of which were deſtroyed in the general corruption of their eſtabliſhments, were, (with indiſcriminate violence and unjuſt ſpoliation it muſt be admitted,) ſuppreſſed *. Thoſe unendowed orders,

† Witneſs Malverne and Godſtow. Cranmer refuſed to conſent to the application of the revenues of the ſuppreſſed eſtabliſhments,

orders, whoſe ambitious intrigues and officious ſervices had been craftily employed in ſupport of former ſuperſtition *, were aboliſhed; but the epiſcopal form of government, with its ſuitable appendages and ſubordinate inſtitutions, reſting on its ancient rights and juriſdiction, and privileges, ſtill maintained its degrees in due dependency of rank; diſtributing its members through every department of ſociety, preſerving in its elevation a luſtre that commands reſpect, and deſcending in its humility wherever ignorance and abaſement demand its care.

Notwithſtanding the unjuſt alienations and embezzlement of the eccleſiaſtical revenues which the Church ſuſtained, to the deplorable impoveriſhment of ſome of its labo-

liſhments to the king's uſe. Latimer interceded particularly with Cromwell for Malverne, that it might be allowed to ſtand; "not in monkery, but ſo as to be converted to preaching, ſtudy, "and prayer. Alas, my good lord, ſays he, ſhall we not ſee "two or three in every ſhire changed to ſuch a remedy?" The imperious wants however, and ſturdy determination of Henry, were not to be reſiſted; though the Parliament reluctantly yielded to the menaces of the king, who had the aſſurance afterwards to aſſert in his ſpeech to the Parliament, that the ſpoil had been committed to him without his deſire, and promiſed to employ it well, towards the ſupport of the poor, and the advancement of learning. See Spelman. Hiſt.

* Warburton has obſerved, that the religious orders of the Church of Rome who had no endowment, were the perſons who got poſſeſſion of the power of the Church. Almoſt all nations have deemed an eſtabliſhment to be neceſſary.

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rious and inferior departments; the liberal assignment reserved to the general appointments of the establishment, swelling in proportion with the increasing value of the requisites of life, certainly secured the Clergy from the necessity of unworthy contrivance; and from that servile dependence on the sovereign, or that precarious reliance on the people, which in different countries had equally tended to degrade the sacred character; rendering the servants of Christ sometimes the slaves of arbitrary power, and sometimes the zealous abettors of faction and intrigue *. Where they have since been unreasonably biassed, and have countenanced principles unfavourable to genuine liberty, it has been the effect of involuntary error; or of such influence and inducements as no regulations could utterly remove, and which seem indeed to be as effectually counteracted, as perhaps by any arrangement could be accomplished by the multiplicity of channels into which the ecclesiastical patronage of the country is distributed †.

An establishment so constituted as to have

* See Lord Molesworth's Account of Denmark, ch. xvi.

† If a patronage, distributed into royal and episcopal departments; among colleges; civil and ecclesiastical corporations; and individuals, be not properly disposed of, what arrangement can be adopted?

no intereſt but in maintaining that dignity which reſults from the preſervation and advancement of truth, could not but be calculated to promote the influence of Chriſtianity. The paſſions and evil imaginations of men, inflamed by the ſuggeſtion of the apoſtate ſpirit, might ſtill continue to reſiſt its evidence and to reject its precepts; but ſtill that evidence and thoſe precepts, renewed with regular enforcement, muſt produce effects of beneficial operation, diſcernible by thoſe who ſhould take a comprehenſive view of life, and allow for the obſtructions and unfavourable circumſtances which impede their tendency. Human wiſdom can contrive nothing, better calculated to advance the true intereſts of religion, than by providing for its general and ſincere promulgation; and it would be difficult to ſhew by what means the conſtant preaching of the Word would be ſecured ſo effectually as by the ſupport of a regular miniſtry, duly educated and appointed to their office; maintained with competent endowment; and with ſuch appointments, as, while they furniſh general independence, keep alive the ſpirit of emulation.

When the doctrines of the national faith were

were ſpecified in preciſe articles, the character of the Church, which the State deſigned to protect, was fully defined. It was a neceſſary condition of the connection which was to ſubſiſt, that every change which the conviction of an enlightened nation might demand in the progreſs of the Reformation, ſhould be ratified by the repreſentative deliberation of the people, before it could be entitled to the civil countenance and ſanction which it claimed. The futility of thoſe reflexions is therefore manifeſt, which would diſparage the Reformation by repreſenting it as the changing work of political contrivance; ſince it is certain that the legiſlative powers of the State interfered in the reſtoration of truth, not as ſpiritual guides, but as expreſſing the ſenſe of the community, as to the deſcription of the improving principles which it deſigned to accept, and as to the civil ſanctions with which it was diſpoſed to ratify their eſtabliſhment. The legitimate interpreters of the ſacred Word were conſulted, and generally firſt depoſed the doctrines of the Scriptures which were reſtored *; but they profeſſed no infallible authority in expounding them; and

* Heylin. Hiſt. of Preſbyter.

the aſſent of the Laity, regularly declared, was requiſite to ſignify their approbation of the principles that were to become articles of their faith, and the boundaries of the Church which was to call for their ſupport. The doctrines thus ratified furniſh to future generations the character of that eſtabliſhment which claims their protection; and every variation in that character muſt continue to require the ſanction of the power which imparts its protection to a ſpecific Church.

The ſtern injunctions * delivered by the State, to impoſe on the ſubject a ſtrict conformity to the worſhip and inſtitutions of the national Church, in the earlier periods of its independency †, were, if viewed diſtinctly from political conſiderations, apparently in-

* It is not meant to cenſure the operation of thoſe injunctions which reſpected the miniſtry, who were certainly to obey the directions of the rulers of the eſtabliſhed Church, or to relinquiſh their preferment; as ſome did in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, to the number of 200, or 243, as other accounts ſtate.

† The ſtatutes of 1 Eliz. c 2. 23 Eliz. c. 1, 2. 25 Eliz. c. 2. 29 Eliz. c. 6. 35 Eliz. c. 1. 1 Edw. VI. c. 2. 2 and 3 Edw. VI. c. 21. 3 Jac. c. 4, 5. 21 Jac. c. 28. 22 Car. II. c. 1. 13 and 14 Car. II. c. 4. enjoined conformity to the ſervice and rites of the Church, under pain of increaſing pecuniary mulcts, impriſonment and baniſhment. A ſmall fine, impoſing attendance on ſome kind of public worſhip, might probably be juſtified; but ſome of theſe were exceſſive, and allowed no freedom of conſcience.

compatible

compatible with the genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity; and inconſiſtent with thoſe rights of a conſcientious and unfettered reaſon, which were ſo fully aſſerted by the general ſpirit of the Reformation. True it is that they were but ſeldom enforced; but ſtill, as they were impreſſed with the ſeal of ſeverity, they have been repealed, or virtually ſuppreſſed, under the influence of thoſe peculiar maxims of liberal toleration, upon which the Church of England is at preſent maintained *. The decided ſupport now given to the national Church, though it preſerves the community from reeling with every change, pretends not to uphold an eſtabliſhment which ſhall ſurvive the conviction of its excellency in the majority of the people.

Diſclaiming all control over the conſciences of men, the legiſlature admits an unreſtrained profeſſion of faith, and an unmoleſted, nay a

* 1 W. & M. ſtat. 1. c. 18. confirmed by 19 G. III. c. 44. ſtat. 10. Ann. c. 2. ſuſpended penal laws againſt diſſenters (except oppugners of the Trinity), who ſhould take the oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy, and ſubſcribe to the declaration againſt popery, and certify their place of public meeting to the Biſhop, Archdeacon, or Juſtice. Some obſolete penalties and diſabilities ſtill remain, by laws, which it is better to neglect than to repeal. See the arguments on Lord Stanhope's bill, propoſed in 1789. See alſo the Articles of Union, 5 Ann, c. 8.

protected,

protected, exercise of every kind of worship *. It restricts not freedom of enquiry; it prohibits not the sober discussion of any speculative doctrine; though it vindicates the majesty of the Supreme Being, and the acknowledged revelation of his laws from contumely and reproach †; and with temperate and proportioned punishment inflicts civil penalties, and precludes from civil privileges those apostate miscreants, who, with daring rejection of all religion, or direct attacks on Christianity and its fundamental doctrines, would destroy the principal springs on which social security depends ‡.

From

* 1 W. & M.

† 1 Hawk. p. 6, 7. 1 Vent. 293. 2 Strange, 834, as quoted by Blackstone, b. vi. c. 4.

‡ In consequence of the licentious abuse of the toleration, restored towards the close of the last century, it was enacted, with the moderation of mitigated laws, by stat. 9 & 10 of W. III. that if any person educated in, or having made profession of the Christian religion, should by writing, preaching, teaching, or advised speaking, deny the Christian religion to be true, or the holy Scriptures to be of Divine authority, he should, upon the first offence, be declared incapable to hold any office or place of trust, and for the second be rendered incapable of bringing any action, being guardian, executor, legatee, or purchaser of lands, and should suffer three years imprisonment without bail: still however, with indulgent consideration it is provided, that if within four months after the first conviction the delinquent will, in open court, publicly renounce, he is discharged for that once from all disabilities. Blackstone's Com. b. iv. c. 4. By the same statute, if any person educated in the Christian religion, or professing the same, shall by writing, teaching, or advised

From thoſe who undertake to preach the doctrines of the National Church as of a congregation of the faithful, the legiſlature, deſirous of preventing diverſity of opinions, where union and conſiſtency are ſo important, naturally demands a teſt of uniformity, an aſſurance of concordant ſentiment *; and therefore requires ſubſcription to its articles, framed in conformity to early practice, as preſumed ſtandards of orthodoxy, and as the creed and avowed profeſſion of its faith. From thoſe whom it admits to offices of truſt and power, it reaſonably ſtipulates for ſome proofs and pledges of regard to the combined intereſts of Church and State, and ſome ſecurity againſt ſuſpected and often blended deſigns of religious and political hoſtility †; in conviction of the invariable operation of the wiſh to ſubvert thoſe principles which

viſed ſpeaking, deny any one of the perſons in the holy Trinity to be God, he ſhall undergo the ſame penalties. Religious impoſtors are alſo puniſhable by temporal courts, as they tend to overthrow all religion, and affect the ſecurity of government. The penalties are mildly and reluctantly inflicted: they indicate a due reverence for religion, but are not employed to diſcourage the diſcuſſion of any queſtion that may lead to the inveſtigation of truth.

* 1 Eliz. c. 12. 13 & 14 Car. II. c. 4. 5 Ann. c. 8. can. 36.

† Statut. 13 Car. II. Stat. 2 c. 1. Stat. 25 Car. II. c. 2.

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the conſcience condemns, and to eſtabliſh thoſe which it approves. Regretting however the eventual effect of partial excluſions of the ſubject from honours and emoluments, of general emulation, extending to the prejudice of conſcientious men *; and lamenting the ſeductive influence of temptation to occaſional or pretended conformity, it would willingly adopt any criterion that could be ſuggeſted, equally efficacious, to ſecure the civil and eccleſiaſtical polity of the country. It mitigates the operation of its laws, and with impartial regard to the claims and advantage of every deſcription of men, apportions its indulgence to its confidence in their known principles and views †.

That

* Opinions will vary as to the extent of the neceſſity of impoſing teſts; but the only juſt principle upon which they can be enforced, is the preſervation of the integrity and ſecurity of the eſtabliſhment. It may be obſerved, that Mr. Plowden ſeems, by a partial extract, to have in one reſpect inadvertently placed in falſe light the tendency of Mr. Paley's reaſoning on this ſubject; who in obſerving that he perceives no reaſon why men of different religious perſuaſions may not ſit upon the ſame bench, deliberate in the ſame council, or fight in the ſame ranks, ſpeaks only of the operation of diſcordancy in religious opinions, and not of the political inexpediency of excluding from thoſe departments perſons who might affect the ſecurity of the eſtabliſhment. Church and State, b. iii. ch. 3.

† The political principles generally connected with the creed and intereſts of the Papiſts, and the ſerious grounds of complaint

That the legiſlature ſhould not riſk the ſafety of the eccleſiaſtical government, by relinquiſhing regulations of experience and circumſpection to the vague profeſſion of clamorous and intereſted diſcontent; and that it ſhould not contract the circles of defence by the demolition of every outward bulwark, deſcribed as offenſive by thoſe who would profit by its deſtruction, is but the caution of a ſalutary prudence. That it ſhould not ſuffer the ordinances of its Church to be reviled or deſpiſed with impunity *, or its appointments to be diſparaged † or obſtructed by detraction and contemptuous ridicule, is but

complaint and alarm which they furniſhed by their opinions and conduct, were the cauſes of the ſeverities which they have experienced. Such mitigations as are compatible with the ſafety of the country have been extended to them, eſpecially by 18, 20, and 31 of Geo. III. with a liberality reſpecting every conſcientious ſcruple; and they will continue to receive, as they ſhall be found to merit, indulgence, and as cauſes of diſtruſt ſhall be removed.

* 1 Edw. VI. c. 1. and 1 Eliz. c. 1. which enact fine and impriſonment againſt revilers of the Sacrament; 1 Eliz. c. 2. which decrees penalties of a ſimilar deſcription againſt thoſe who ſpeak in derogation or contempt of the Book of Common Prayer. Blackſtone ſays, that the terror of theſe laws (for they ſeldom or ever were executed) proved a principal means, under Providence, of preſerving the purity as well as decency of our national worſhip.

† Statute 1 Car. I. c. 1. 29 Car. II. c. 7. for preventing by fine the profanation of the Lord's day; ſee alſo 1 Geo. I. againſt ſwearing.

the

the temperate proviſion of a diſcreet authority, and what every ſtate which would countenance a religious eſtabliſhment muſt adopt*.

The line of forbearance is drawn with the ſtricteſt regard to freedom of conſcience, and intolerance is buried in our country, never again, we truſt, to riſe.

The Roman hierarchy erred in the arbibitrary impoſition of its decrees on the State. We conſider the State as it were a part of the Church, and invite it to a joint acceptance of regulations, adopted with equal and conſenting regard to the intereſts of religion and ſociety. The eſtabliſhment reſts on the baſis of the general approbation, confirmed by experience of advantages long enjoyed. If it have its defects, ſtriking with the magnitude of preſent evil, they ſhould not miſlead us to diſparage its comparative merits, far beyond competition as they are; or to forget that in all human conſtitutions ſomewhat of poſſible excellence muſt be ſacrificed to practical expediency.

The inadequate and diſproportioned provi-

* The directory was ſupported by an ordinance in 1645, which ſubjected thoſe who wrote in derogation of it to a diſcretionary fine, not exceeding 50l. Blackſtone's Com. b. iv. c. 4.

ſion

ſion for the humbler, though equally important ſtations of the Church, cannot but be lamented, on the moſt ſerious and intereſting principles; in reflecting on the degraded conſequence, the curtailed power, and not ſeldom the ſcanty and embarraſſed ſubſiſtence of the diligent and diſtinguiſhed paſtors of the Church. Conſiderable are the difficulties which obſtruct the remedy; conſiderable, but not, we truſt, inſuperable. While thus they operate, the merit, which is inadequately recompenſed, muſt recollect, that no ſyſtem could diſtribute its equal rewards to all; that none could annihilate the influence of partial friendſhip or erroneous preference. It will recollect, that an eſtabliſhment, of which the greateſt defect is that it cannot remunerate the ſervices of all its members, but exhibits the character of all human diſpenſations. Weighing its own deſerts, not by the fallacious eſtimate of ſelf-love, but with the humility that induceth content, and ſtimulateth to diſintereſted ſervice, it will look to that recompence which no partial ſentence will decree—no unequal allotment diſturb.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

JOHN XX. 21, 22, 23.

Then ſaid Jeſus to them again, Peace be unto you. As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on them, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt. Whoſe-ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whoſe-ſoever ſins ye retain, they are retained.

THIS ſolemn delegation of the higheſt authority was imparted by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, after his reſurrection from the grave, when he beſtowed, in final benediction, the perfect charter and ratification of a Divine commiſſion, and transferred to them the earthly government of his kingdom; in words which ſeem to import the deputation of the ſame power which he had received

from the Father, when he " made himſelf " of no reputation, and took upon him the " form of a ſervant *;" being inveſted with an office, to be fulfilled in the ſubſerviency and obedience of the human nature. The communication was accompanied with the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe guidance was eſſentially and indiſpenſably neceſſary to direct the employment of ſuch important authority as appears to have been entruſted to the Apoſtles, when aſſured that " whoſe-ſoever ſins they re- " mitted ſhould be remitted," and " whoſe-ſo- " ever ſins they retained ſhould be retained :" ſince the words lead us to underſtand no leſs than the conveyance of a judicial right to decide on the remiſſion or retainment of ſins, as to their final conſequences and reward.

For the illuſtration of the full extent of the commiſſion thus conſigned to the Apoſtles, it may be expedient to conſider what powers were exerciſed by Chriſt in the ordinary diſcharge of that miniſtry, which " being found " in faſhion, as a man he humbled himſelf" to accept; ſince as the Father had ſent him, ſo ſent he the Apoſtles; with ſimilar appointment to preach the Goſpel, and with equal

* Philip, ch. ii. ver. 7, 8.

aſſurance,

aſſurance, in his name, to apply the promiſes of admiſſion to, and continuance in, its privileges. In dependency on this enquiry, and with reference to our general theme, it is deſigned to inveſtigate the permanent rights which may be underſtood to be derived to the ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, with reſpect to this great power, the ſanction of the ſpiritual authority; as vindicated with the rejection of unfounded pretenſions, and the eſtabliſhment of juſt claims at the Reformation.

The abſolute and uncontrollable power of erecting the ſtandard of good and evil, and of marking out the limits of obſervance and tranſgreſſion, is the eſſential and eminent prerogative of God; of him who "maketh peace "and createth evil *," who implanted the moral ſenſe, and revealed the unerring rule, —his excluſive right it muſt be to enforce or to relax the ſternneſs of his requiſitions upon principles of unſearchable wiſdom †; to iſſue out inexorable decrees, or to intimate conditional threats and promiſes; to impute iniquity, or to vindicate ſuſpected righteouſneſs; to diſtribute wrath in the preſent life, or to

* Iſaiah, ch. xlv. ver. 7.

† Exod. ch. xxxiv. ver. 7. αφιεναι αμαρτηματα γαρ μονω τω Θεω δυνατον. Chryſoſtom. in 1 Cor. ch. xv.

withhold a proportioned reward, till the diſpenſation of that final judgment, in which mercy will be mingled with unimpeachable juſtice. That he who poſſeſſeth the power may delegate it however to his miniſters, to exerciſe with ſuch authority, and on ſuch terms, as he appoints, can admit of no queſtion.

That our bleſſed Redeemer was true and perfect God. That as the prophets had deſcribed the Meſſiah *, and as on his appearance he was declared to be †, he was "one with the Father," we conſider as an eſtabliſhed truth. From this eſſential nature radiated the excellencies of that glory which exiſted "in the beginning," and conſtituted the ſufficiency of that character which alone could offer up an adequate atonement for the ſins of mankind ‡. This incorruptible per-

* Iſaiah, ch. ix. ver. 6.

† John, ch. x. ver. 30. and Mr. Hawtrey's Appeal to the New Teſtament, p. 44—50. 1 John, ch. v. ver. 21. Luke, ch. i. ver. 16, 17. compared with Malachi, ch. iii. ver. 1. Matt. ch. i. ver. 23. John, ch. xiv. ver. 10. Rom. ch. ix. ver. 5. Revel. ch. i. ver. 7, 8. ch. xvii. ver. 14, 19.

‡ Chriſt, as God alone, could offer a ſatisfactory oblation to the Divine juſtice; and a body was "prepared for him," that he might have ſomewhat to offer. Heb. ch. x. ver. 5. This ſtatement ſolves the queſtion, which has occaſioned great diſputes in the Lutheran Church, concerning the expiation, whether it were made by Chriſt in his Divine or human character. Moſheim, cent. 16. ſect. 3. p. 2.

fection

fection it was, which could not partake of the pollution and abaſement of the fleſh, and broke forth with frequent manifeſtation on earth, in the aſſumption of eternal attributes *, in the declarations of Almighty power †. Still however, in the reverent contemplation of Chriſt's character are we authoriſed to conſider him, when that "glory "which he had before the world ‡" was veiled under human condition, as engaged in the execution of an office to be performed, in its ordinary exerciſe, with ſubjection to the Father §. He who had been in the form of God, and by whom "all things were "made," profeſſed, in the miniſtration of the ſervice || which he had undertaken, to derive all power and knowledge from the Father.

Hence with a declaration of inferiority, referring, it is conceived, to his human nature

* John, ch. i. ver. 1, 3, 14. ch. viii. ver. 58. ch. xi. ver. 25, 26. ch. xvii. ver. 5. Col. ch. i. ver. 17. Heb. ch. i. ver. 3.

† John, ch. ii. ver. 19. ch. vi. ver. 40, 44. ch. x. ver. 18, 28. Col. ch. i. ver. 17.

‡ John, ch. xvii. ver. 5.

§ Irenæus repreſents the Divine nature to have been quieſcent at the temptation, crucifixion, and death of Chriſt, but to have been aſſiſtant (or the human nature to have been abſorbed) in his victory, his reſurrection, and aſcenſion. Cont. Hæreſ. l. iii. c. 21.

|| Γενομενος υπηκοος. Philip. ch. ii. ver. 8. 2 Cor. ch. viii. ver. 9.

and office, and not to any distinction resulting from a mysterious subordination in the identity of the Godhead *, or to any merely filial dependency in the eternal or in the human generation of the Son †, he affirmed, that he "could do nothing of himself;" that he delivered doctrine not his own, and "spake "not of himself," and "knew not ‡."

This

* The subordination of the Son, admitted by Pearson, Bull, Waterland, Bishop Horsley, and others, implies no inferiority in the Divine nature of Christ, but a difference of order and office. See Defens. Fid. Nicæn. cap. xi; Pearson on the Creed; Waterland on the Athan. Creed; and Preface to Eight Sermons on the Defence of the Divinity of Christ; Bishop Horsley's 15th Letter to Priestley; Tertull. adver. Prax. c. ix, xii, xiii.

† Mr. Hawtrey's suggestion, in his late learned works, has been fully investigated by the standard of Scripture and the primitive Creed. We have only to observe, that if it could be proved, that the term Son was first assumed when the Word was made flesh, it would not lessen the difficulties of these passages, in which Christ professes his subordination and subjection to the Father; and it must have been in the reality of his human nature, and not merely in title, that the inferiority of Christ obtained. The notion is mentioned by Waterland and Sherlock as an ancient and erroneous opinion; and it may be apprehended indeed that the proofs of Christ's Divine nature, which are drawn from a generation not taking place till his appearance in the flesh, will not tend to establish the eternal equality of our Lord. See the Bp. of Chester's and Mr. Hodson's late Publications.

‡ John, ch. v. ver. 19, 30. ch. vii. ver. 16. ch. viii. ver. 28. ch. xii. ver. 49, 50. ch. xiv. ver. 10. Acts, ch. i. ver. 2. Luke, ch. ii. ver. 52. Mark, ch. xiii. ver. 32. Irenæus, who cites this last verse, supposes Christ to have been ignorant of the day and hour therein referred to; in perfect consistency with that belief in the Divine nature of Christ, and his equality with God,

This was a ſuitable effect of the aſſumption of an human character for the execution of a delegated commiſſion, in conformity to the requiſitions of God's will, and for an example of obedience to mankind. It was agreeable alſo to the deſign of an appointment, which was to be defective in no formal evidence, to reſt on no ſelf-atteſted report *. The works, which were to bear ſuffrage to Chriſt's pretenſions, were to argue a concurrent authority, and an unity of will, demonſtrating that the Father had ſent him, that he dwelt in him, and had not given him the Spirit by meaſure †.

Conſiſtently

God, which he every where fervently maintains. Cont. Hæreſ. l. ii. c. 48. and note. Feuard. in cap. xlix. It may be obſerved, however, that when Chriſt ſays that the Son "knoweth not," it ſeems inſufficient merely to ſuppoſe him to aſcribe a precedency of knowledge to the Father, and to profeſs to derive it, as he did life and eternal generation, from him; ſince, however derived, if he poſſeſſed the knowledge, he could not, as God, ſay that he knew not. But in his human character he might aſſert that he knew not—It was not within the competency and concern of his miniſtry. Lightfoot obſerves well on the place, that we muſt diſtinguiſh between the excellencies and perfections which flow from the hypoſtatical union between the two natures, and thoſe which flow from the donation and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

* John, ch. v. ver. 31. ch. viii. ver. 14—18. ch. x. ver. 37, 38. ch. xiv. ver. 9, 10.

† John, ch. iii. ver. 34, 35. John, ch. xi. ver. 41. It is deſerving of notice, that St. John, who inſiſts more forcibly than any of the ſacred writers on the Divine nature and attributes of Chriſt, furniſhes alſo the moſt abundant proofs of his acting, in his office of prophet and miniſter, by a delegated com-

Conſiſtently with this repreſentation, the indications of an imparted authority were furniſhed on the firſt admiſſion of Chriſt to his conſecrated office, when the heavens were opened at his baptiſm, and the Spirit of God, of whom alſo he was conceived, deſcended in viſible manifeſtation *, and lighted upon him; and he was "anointed with the Holy Ghoſt "and with power †." By the influence of this Spirit, which was to "bear witneſs in "earth ‡," the functions of the prophetic character were fulfilled §, and the miniſtry of an obedient ſervice directed ||.

In contemplating the conduct of an incar-

miſſion. By aſſerting the Godhead in the moſt unequivocal terms in the prior part of his Goſpel, the Evangeliſt precluded the deduction of concluſions derogatory to Chriſt's dignity, from his ſubſequent ſtatement. See alſo Matt. ch. xxviii. ver. 18.

* Εν σωματικῳ ειδει, Luke, ch. iii. ver. 22. with a bodily ſhape, hovering, as a dove hovers with outſpread wings, and probably with a diſplay of glorious light. See Patrick's Witneſſes, ch. iv. p. 75. and Taylor's Ductor Dubitant. b. ii. rule 6.

† Acts, ch. x. ver. 38. ‡ 1 John, ch. v. ver. 8.

§ It had been foreſhewn of Chriſt to Moſes, that he ſhould utter the words which God ſhould "put into his mouth," and ſpeak what he was commanded. Deut. ch. xviii. ver. 18, 19. It was the eſſential character of a prophet not to ſpeak in his own name, or what was not commanded him. Deut. ch. xviii. ver. 20. Numb. ch. xxii. ver. 18. Jerem. ch. i. ver. 7.

|| Luke, ch. ii. ver. 27. ch. iv. ver. 1—18. Acts, ch. i. ver. 2. Matt. ch. xii. ver. 18. Waterland's 6th Sermon.

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nate God, whoſe actions were perhaps intended to be illuſtrative of his Divine attributes, as well as expreſſive of the nature of his commiſſion, it would be preſumptuous, by any poſitive diſcrimination of his works, to determine, which are to be conſidered as the exertions of an omnipotence inherent in his own perſon, and which are to be regarded as the teſtimonies and offices of the Spirit. The concurrence of deſign, and the conjunction of powers diſplayed in a glorious and conſummate ſcheme of mercy, when the voice of the Father accompanied the deſcent of the Spirit, and the influence of the Spirit conſpired with the adminiſtration of the Son, have produced an union of operation between thoſe who are of equal glory; in which the reſpective agents are not always diſtinctly characterized. Therefore it is that our Lord, when appearing in his prophetic and miniſterial character, performs thoſe actions which are aſcribed to the guidance of the Holy Ghoſt *, with the authoritative voice of an uncontrolled and ſupreme Power †; and with intention to advance the faith offers up an

* Matt. ch. xii. ver. 28. Rom. ch. viii. ver. 11.

† Matt. ch. viii. ver. 3. Mark, ch. i. ver. 25—27, 41. ch. v. ver. 41. John, ch. ii. ver. 19.

addreſs

addreſs to the Father for the reſtoration of him that was dead, though himſelf empowered at all times "to quicken whom he "would *." Hence alſo is the eternal Spirit ſpoken of by the ſacred writers in reſpect to Chriſt, with a latitude which leaves us to doubt whether the Divine nature of our Lord or the Holy Ghoſt be intended †.

As however the publication of the Goſpel, and the works which were wrought in confirmation of its claims, are uſually aſcribed to the eſpecial influence of the Spirit; the power of remitting and of retaining ſins may, at leaſt, with conſiſtency of deſign, be conſidered alſo as the gift of the Spirit; appointed in ſupport of an authority deſtitute of earthly ſanctions; annexed in the character of our Lord to the prieſthood with which he was inveſted, when rendered "like unto his bre-"thren, to make reconciliation for the ſins "of the people ‡;" which he exerciſed in its firſt diſcharge, when the Spirit of the Lord

* John, ch. xi. ver. 42. compared with ch. v. ver. 21—26.

† Heb. ch. ix. ver. 14. where ſome underſtand by the eternal Spirit "the Holy Ghoſt," and ſome the "Divine nature of Chriſt." See Whitby on Matt. ch. iii. ver. 16. and Sherlock's Scripture Proofs, ch. i. Heb. ch. viii. ver. 3. 1 Peter, ch. iii. ver. 18.

‡ Heb. ch. ii. ver. 17. ch. vii. ver. 24, 25.

was

was upon him, becauſe the Lord had "an-
"ointed him to preach good tidings unto the
"meek, had ſent him to bind up the broken-
"hearted, to proclaim liberty to the cap-
"tives*."

The Goſpel was founded on the promiſe of forgiveneſs and reconciliation; ſo, was it witneſſed to be, by the prophets †, proclaimed by the Baptiſt, and preached by the Apoſtles ‡. In the ordinary exerciſe of his miniſtry, therefore, Chriſt propoſed the forgiveneſs of ſins to all, who accepted the terms of ſalvation; and when by a particular application he certified the hope of pardon to thoſe who profeſſed a faith in his power, he may be ſuppoſed to have exerted, not an extraordinary and partial prerogative of the Godhead, "ſince he came "down from heaven, not to do his own will," or to receive any that the Father did not draw, but rather a right of that judgment which "was committed to him" who "had "the key of David §;" in conſiſtency with the deſign of his office; though indeed that judg-

* Iſaiah, ch. lxi. ver. 1. † Acts, ch. x. ver. 43.
‡ Luke, ch. xxiv. ver. 47. John, ch. i. ver. 12. Acts, ch. ii. ver. 38. ch. xiii. ver. 38. ch. v. ver. 31, 32. Rom. ch. iii. ver. 25. Col. ch. ii. ver. 14.
§ John, ch. vi. ver. 38, 44. ch. v. ver. 22. Rev. ch. iii. v. 7.

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ment, in its full and final adminiſtration, could be exerciſed by him alone who was perfect God.

That the remiſſion of ſins, annexed to a faithful acceptance of the Goſpel, and the pardon held out by our Lord on particular occaſions, extended to the eternal event, there is full authority to conclude. In the inſtance of the paralytic, whoſe faith, doubtleſs, as well as that of the perſons who brought him, Jeſus had ſeen, the forgiveneſs of ſins conveyed in the Divine aſſurance, cannot juſtly be reſtricted to any imaginary cauſe of that diſorder, under which the ſick man laboured; nor is there any ſufficient reaſon to ſuppoſe our Saviour's declaration to import leſs than a pardon for all the ſins of which he, who was the object of his mercy had been guilty; as well as to eternal as to preſent conſequences*; a promiſe, that, if the faith which then exiſted ſhould continue, his ſins ſhould be remitted in concluſive judgment, and the man have a claim to the privileges of everlaſting life. That the Jews ſo underſtood the aſſur-

* Whitby conſiders the palſy as an effect of, or judgment for, the ſins of the man, and that our Lord ſpeaks of the remiſſion only of the temporal puniſhment inflicted for ſins, and obtained by the faith, not of the palſied man, but of thoſe who brought him.

ance,

ance, is clear, ſince they imputed blaſphemy to our Lord *; and it ſhould be obſerved, as a preſumption that Chriſt acted in virtue of a derived commiſſion, that he rejects the imputation, not by the aſſertion of that undiſputed prerogative which as God he might have exerciſed, but by arguing, that it was not more difficult to forgive ſins than to perform a miracle; and as a proof that the Son of Man had "power on earth †" to forgive ſins, he commanded the paralytic to ariſe, and demonſtrate his reſtoration to health and vigour.

Thoſe who reſtrict the forgiveneſs of ſins mentioned in this relation, cannot at leaſt deny, that upon other occaſions our Lord extended complete forgiveneſs, as well to the woman who anointed his feet with ointment ‡, as to the malefactor, whoſe repentance and faith he diſcerned, when at his cru-

* Mark, ch. ii. ver. 1—12. Their reaſoning, that God only could forgive ſins, that is, by his own authority, was juſt alſo; but it will not prove that the remiſſion of ſins might not be annexed, as a ſanction to the ſpiritual authority to be exerciſed by man.

† Matt. ch. ii. ver. 10. ch. ix. ver. 6. May we not underſtand Chriſt here to ſignify, that even "on earth," in his human character and office, he had that power? That he had in heaven, as God, was indiſputable.

‡ Luke, ch. vii. ver. 47.

ciſixion

ciſixion he promiſed that on that day the ſufferer ſhould be with him in Paradiſe.

Whether we ſuppoſe Chriſt to have exerted this power in his own uncontrolled prerogative as "the Prince of Peace," or in virtue of his imparted commiſſion, we can have no ſufficient reaſon, it is preſumed, to doubt that the authority conſigned by him to his Apoſtles, when "he breathed on them, and ſaid, "Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt," was plenary; and as extenſive as to its effects, as that which he himſelf had exerciſed; an authority not only to publiſh the terms of evangelical ſalvation, but to apply, by a judicial diſcrimination *, its infallible decrees to the individual.

The delegation, thus given in final appointment to the Apoſtles, has been ſuppoſed to be a confirmation only of that promiſe which had been previouſly made in other terms to St. Peter †, and afterwards to the reſt of the Apoſtles; when our Lord had affirmed to them, that "whatſoever they ſhould "bind on earth ſhould be bound in heaven, "and whatſoever they ſhould looſe on earth,

* 1 Cor. ch. v. ver. 12.

† Matt. ch. xvi. ver. 19. Hammond on the place, and Marſhal's Penitential Diſcipline of the Primitive Church, p. 12, 13.

"ſhould

" ſhould be looſed in heaven *." The words of our Saviour on each occaſion, ſeparately or jointly conſidered, ſeem to imply no leſs than an abſolute and authoritative power of remitting and of retaining ſins, as to their pardon or puniſhment in a future life; and thoſe, who, by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, have underſtood merely the keys of the Chriſtian Church, and by the power of looſing and binding; of remitting and retaining; a power only of abſolving from, or of fettering by, eccleſiaſtical cenſures, muſt at leaſt admit, that the binding on heaven † imports a Divine ratification of the earthly ſentence.

This authority, however unreſtrained, could not be abuſed by thoſe who acted uniformly under the direction of the Holy Spirit, " who " guided them into all truth, and ſhewed " them things to come ‡;" who " ſearched all " things, yea the deep things of God §." " As " my Father hath ſent me," ſaid our Lord,

* Matt. ch. xviii. ver. 18. Origen. in Matt. tom. xii. § 10, 11.

† Heaven is put in diſtinction from earth. The Apoſtles could bind on earth, only as they were rulers of a church on earth.

‡ John, ch. xvi. ver. 13.

§ 1 Cor. ch. ii. ver. 10.

whom

whom we know to have had power to forgive ſins, "even ſo ſend I you," without any limitation of authority, or qualification, as to the nature of the ſins *, and with a promiſe, that if they had faith, they ſhould "do works "as great or greater, than thoſe which they "had ſeen him perform †," and that "when "the Son of man ſhould ſit upon the throne "of his glory, they alſo ſhould ſit upon "twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes "of Iſrael ‡."

The Apoſtles, as miniſters of a Lord who "came into the world to ſave ſinners," exerciſed their power "in the ſpirit of meek-"neſs §;" and with regard to the correction of thoſe whom they addreſſed, they inflicted, it is true, fearful and impreſſive puniſhments

* Wheatly conceives that our Lord empowered the Apoſtles to remit ſins even in relation to God, inſomuch that thoſe ſins which they ſhould declare forgiven by virtue of this commiſſion, ſhould be actually forgiven of God himſelf, ſo as to be imputed no more; but ſtill wiſhes to reſtrict the power to a forgiveneſs of the ſins of thoſe on whom ſome temporal calamity or diſeaſe had been inflicted as a puniſhment for ſins. The terms of the commiſſion, however, by no means reſtrain the forgiveneſs to thoſe whoſe exceſſive ſins are ſuppoſed to have drawn down temporal judgments; and it ſhould be remembered, that our Saviour on one occaſion declared that the blindneſs of a man, whom he reſtored to ſight, was not the puniſhment of any ſin.

† John, ch. xiv. ver. 12. ‡ Matt. ch. xix. ver. 28.

§ 1 Cor. ch. iv. ver. 21.

on

on thoſe who dared to " tempt the Spirit of " the Lord," or to withſtand their miraculous embaſſy and deſign ; and in the caſe of Ananias and Sapphira have been by ſome imagined to have exerted their power of retaining ſins to its fulleſt extent; ſince the decree, which in its execution precluded repentance, and demonſtrated the Divine concurrence, might be apprehended to indicate a final and deciſive ratification ; as alſo it is contended, that on other occaſions they imprecated eternal deſtruction on thoſe who loved not the Lord Jeſus *. Their ſentence however, in general, though infallibly ſure of accompliſhment, as founded on unerring obſervation, was irreverſible, only as the condition of the perſon remained unaltered ; and they or their immediate delegates, ſolemnly authoriſed, in the power of the Spirit, delivered to Satan † thoſe whoſe flagitious crimes, or

* 1 Cor. ch. xvi. ver 22. Maran-atha is a Syriac expreſſion for " the Lord cometh," and has been ſuppoſed to import final deſtruction. See Whitby. See alſo Galat. ch. iv. ver. 12. 2 Tim. ch. iv. ver. 14. John, ch. v. ver. 16.

† 1 Cor. ch. v. ver. 5. 1 Tim. ch. i. ver. 20. The delivering to Satan, might be the giving up of the body to the power of evil ſpirits, who, at the time of the preaching of the Goſpel, often poſſeſſed the perſons of men. Thoſe who were baptized, and who remained in the communion of the

or apoſtate rejection of the faith, forfeited the protection of the Church, with deſign ultimately to defeat the powers of darkneſs; for the "deſtruction" only "of the fleſh, that "the ſpirit might be ſaved in the day of the "Lord Jeſus*," that thoſe whom they condemned might "learn not to blaſpheme;" and they intermingled with their threats exhortation to repentance, that "the things "which they had ſpoken might not come "upon thoſe whom they beheld bounden in "the bonds of iniquity."

That the Apoſtles employed their authority in releaſing ſinners from a guilt to be remembered no more, may perhaps be argued from the direction given by St. James, that "if any ſhould be ſick, he ſhould call for the "elders of the Church, who might pray "over him; and that the prayer of faith "ſhould ſave the ſick; and if he had com-

Church, were probably ſcreened by its protection; and hence a conſiderable reputation to the Church miraculouſly ſanctioned, when deſtitute of civil ſupports. The Apoſtles, and their immediate deſcendants, appear to have poſſeſſed the power of lengthening or contracting the chain, by which Satan and his miniſters were controlled. Theod. Some think that the expreſſion imports only a rejection from Chriſt's kingdom into that of the adverſary. See Critical Hiſt. of the Apoſt. Creed, p. 141.

* Acts, ch. viii. ver. 22.

"mitted

" mitted ſins, they ſhould be forgiven " him *."

While the full extent of the commiſſion entruſted to the Apoſtles is aſſerted, it is obvious to remark, that ſuch unreſtrained power could be conſigned only to thoſe whom the guidance of the Holy Ghoſt preſerved from error. It could not be continued to any, who, with penetration merely human, and with paſſions inſtigated by uncontrolled corruption, might be biaſſed to undue partiality, or inflamed to diſproportioned wrath. The peremptory and unqualified claim of remitting and of retaining ſins, muſt neceſſarily be conſidered as the peculiar privilege of the inſpired miniſters of the Goſpel; as reſtricted, together with the gift and miraculous powers of utterance and operation, to thoſe who acted under the direction of the Holy Ghoſt; though an authoritative right of conditional abſolution and condemnation, as to eternal conſequences, may be regarded as the permanent ſupport of the

* James, ch. v. ver. 14, 15. The Apoſtle ſpeaks in an authoritative tone, αφεθησεται. It may be obſerved, that St. James does not conſider the diſorder as the effect of ſin, but ſtates a caſe, in which is implied a doubt, whether the ſick perſon ſhould be guilty or not of any eſpecial ſins.

ſpiritual authority, tranſmitted with the general title of the miniſtry.

At what period the immediate and miraculous influence of the Spirit was withdrawn from the Church, has not been decided with ſufficient evidence to determine controverſy*. It does not however appear, that the primitive and uncorrupted ſucceſſors of the Apoſtles, though, with the general rights of the miniſtry, they claimed the appropriate authority of applying God's threats and promiſes, as to their effects in a future life†; and inſiſted on the doctrine of the remiſſion of ſins by the true Church, as an article of Faith ‡, to be believed by thoſe who were

* The power of performing miracles, which may be conſidered as an appendage of the power of the Spirit, is generally ſuppoſed to have ceaſed in the third, or at fartheſt in the fourth century. Gibbon aſſigns, as the third cauſe for the rapid advancement of Chriſtianity, the miraculous powers of the Church; yet invalidates his argument by impeaching their authority.

† Επειδαν ὁ χριτης εν τη γη καθηται ὁ Δεσποτης επεται τω δελῳ, ſays St. Chryſoſtom. See alſo Com. in Matth. tom. xii. §. 14. Tertullian conſiders the Church cenſure as a Divine cenſure; as a prejudgment of the future ſentence. Tertull. Apol. c. xxxix. In the third century it was decreed, in the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches, that abſolution ſhould be given to thoſe at the point of death, with reference to eternal reward, ινα ενελπιδες απαλλαττωνται. Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. l. vi. c. xliv. Epiſt. prim. Cleri Romani ad Cyprian. et ad Cler. Carthag.

‡ Apoſtles Creed. Cyprian. Epiſt. 69—70. Edit. Fell. Hieron. con. Luciſer—Per hanc enim ſtat Eccleſia quæ in terris eſt. Auguſt. Enchirid. c. lxiv.

baptized,

baptized, yet pretended to any infallibility in judging of the internal character of thoſe, whom they addreſſed. Their ſentence was uttered in full conviction of its accompliſhment, on a ſuppoſition of the reality of the circumſtances, on which they pronounced *; generally in connected conſideration with the decree of admiſſion to, or excluſion from Church communion; but occaſionally with aſſurance of conditional forgiveneſs; and ſometimes with an unalterable ſentence, as to eternal conſequences, and to thoſe who had incurred no cenſure of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline.

Briefly then to recapitulate what, with a diffidence becoming on ſuch a ſubject, we would be underſtood to maintain; the power of remitting and of retaining ſins is conſidered as the neceſſary and permanent ſanction of the ſpiritual authority; exerciſed by Chriſt and by his Apoſtles, with preternatural knowledge and peremptory application, and to

* The ſentence of excluſion was grounded on the preſumption of abſciſion from Chriſt's eternal kingdom. Dr. Stebbing makes therefore a very erroneous aſſertion, when he affirms, that in the primitive Church public abſolution was nothing more than a releaſe from Church cenſures, and a reſtoration of the offender to the privilege of viſible communion: a ſtatement the more noticeable, as inſerted in a book adopted by the ſociety for promoting Chriſtian knowledge. See an account of the prayers and ſacrament of the Lord's Supper, p. 55.

be inherited by their ſucceſſors, in the government of the Church, as among the general rights of the miniſtry; but with no aſſumption of intuitive penetration; with implied conditions, though authoritative declaration.

It was not till the principles of the primitive faith were changed, that the preſumptuous boaſt of infallibility was conſiſtently claimed by thoſe, who affected the unqualified and unconditional power of remitting and retaining ſins, and dared to prophane that pretended power, with the intereſted deſign of profiting by the credulity of mankind *. The proclaimed ſucceſſors of St. Peter, after departing from the integrity of his faith, arrogated with offenſive preſumption a peculiar title to the poſſeſſion of thoſe keys, which they falſely maintained to have been bequeathed with excluſive prerogative to that Apoſtle †; and to confer a juriſdiction

* Even in the time of St. Jerom, the arbitrary power of abſolving ſins was aſſumed. This father ſpeaks of ſome, who thought that they could condemn the innocent and abſolve the guilty, 1 Com. in Matt. l. iii. He in one place repreſents the power as declaratory, but in another conſiders the prieſts as in ſome meaſure judging before the final day. See Epiſt. ad Heliod.

† Cyprian de Lapſis, Epiſt. 33. & de Unitat. where he repreſents the Church, for the ſake of unity, to originate from one, but all the Apoſtles to have equal power.

definitive

definitive as to the intereſts of the preſent and of future life, competent to regulate the decrees of temporal and eternal judgment *.

The claim thus extended was rendered the foundation for the ſupport of that authority, which was uſurped over the minds and perſons of men. Hence, when the increaſing offences of the Church ſhrunk from the ſcandal of public penance, and were to be uttered only in the whiſpers of private confeſſion †, the ſentence of the prieſt became gradually to be conſidered as eſſential to ſalvation, and ſufficient in itſelf, without regard to that full and complete repentance, which ſhould qualify for abſolution. Temporal expiations were accepted for ſpiritual offences, on the ſtipulated price of redemption, as well from future puniſhment, as from eccleſiaſtical cenſure. Sin was emboldened by the fancied facility of its remiſ-

* R. Simon Biblioth. Com. iii. c. xxxiii.

† Auricular confeſſion indeed had been eſtabliſhed in the third century, in the Greek Church, and in the fifth century in the Weſtern Church, by Leo the Great. By inſenſible departure from the ſpirit of the inſtitution, it was required as neceſſary to ſalvation; with minuteſt enumeration of particulars, and without cautious proviſion for repentance. Origen Hom. 2. in Pſalm xxxvii. Leo Epiſt. 69, and 78. Auguſt. de Symbol. de Catech. l. i. c. vi. Concil. Lateran. It has been long a peremptory and miſchievous form in the Romiſh Church.

ſion, and even encouraged by ſecret connivance, for the advantage which reſulted from the ſacrifice of its profits: the viſions of purgatory, the efficacy of ſolitary maſſes, the interceſſions and transferable merit of ſaints were proclaimed; the meaſures of indulgence were meted out, and the ſale of imaginary treaſures of ſuperfluous righteouſneſs was carried on with ſcandalous and avowed traffic.

Such as rejected the proffered terms of ſalvation, injurious as they were to the doctrine of Chriſt's atonement, were perſecuted with vindictive ſeverity; were expoſed to denunciations of eternal wrath, and forfeiture of temporal poſſeſſions. Individuals were ſevered from the connections of ſociety, and often deprived of freedom and of life. Monarchs were dethroned*, their ſubjects excited to rebellion, and interdicted kingdoms were ravaged by bigotted and confederate invaders †. The terrors of Pagan excommunication

* Innocent III. excommunicated Philip King of France, Alphonſo of Leon, Raymond of Toulouſe, and John of England.

† The petty princes of Europe were compelled by the Papal power to perſecute heretics wherever they could be diſcovered, and the religious orders were eſtabliſhed to fight againſt them. Raymond

tion were revived *, and the confidence and peace of ſociety deſtroyed, by treachery and violence.

When the rights of the Church were inveſtigated at the Reformation in this country, the ſame moderation and regard to juſt claims were preſerved in this important point as in others; and while the genuine privileges of the different orders † of the miniſtry were reverenced,

Raymond Count of Toulouſe was obliged to enter into a cruſade againſt the Albigenſes, his own ſubjects. Hiſt. des Troubadours. The emperor Frederic not only condemned thoſe to be burnt, who were convicted by the eccleſiaſtical judge, but directed, that, if any temporal lord, after admonition, ſhould neglect to extirpate heretics from his territories, within a year, it ſhould be permitted to catholics to ſeize the lands, and exterminate the heretical poſſeſſors. Lyndewode de Hereticis Cod. 1, 5, 4. as cited by Blackſtone. The Emperor was himſelf expelled from the throne of Sicily by his own conſtitution —neque enim lex æquior.

* Moſheim obſerves, that in the eighth century excommunications in Europe acquired new acceſſions of terror. He repreſents the barbarous converts to Chriſtianity, to have confounded the excommunication in uſe among the Chriſtians, with that which had been practiſed in the times of Paganiſm. Cent. viii. p. ii. ch. ii. §. 6. note P. Cæſar de Bell. Gall. l. vi. c. xiii. Tacitus Orat. 49. See alſo Joſeph. de Bell. Jud. l. ii. c. vii. for account of the terrible excommunication eſtabliſhed by the Eſſenes.

† Neal affirms, that in Edward's ordinal, "the form of ordaining a biſhop and prieſt is the ſame," and that "the Reformers in his reign believed but two orders in Holy Scripture." See Hiſt. of Puritans, ch. ii. Neither of which poſitions is true. Collyer has pointed out ſome differences in the terms. See vol. i. p. ii. b. iv. The three orders are ſeparately enumerated in

renced, their fictitious pretenſions were rejected. Every juſt power, which could be derived in virtue of a tranſmitted authority, was aſſerted on the ground of a legitimate and uninterrupted ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles: whatever of excluſive right, whatever of permanent juriſdiction, could be juſtly challenged by the prieſthood, as compoſed of "Ambaſſadors of Chriſt, rightly called to "their office, and ordained by the laying on "of hands," and duly appointed "ſtewards of "the myſteries of God," however affected or infringed by tranſient declarations *, was finally reſpected and ratified †. Such power indeed,

in the form, and in the act confirming it, as they had been in the neceſſary Erudition of a Chriſtian Man. See Hammond on the Power of the Keys. Taylor's Life of Chriſt, p. iii. §. 16. Wells's Paraphraſe on 1 Cor. v.

* As by thoſe of Henry, Edward, Elizabeth, &c. See preceding Diſcourſe.

† In a declaration of the functions and divine inſtitution of biſhops and prieſts, ſigned by Cromwell and Cranmer, the ſpiritual power of the miniſtry to preach and teach the word of God, to adminiſter the ſacraments, and to confer the Holy Ghoſt, to conſecrate the bleſſed body of Chriſt, to looſe and abſolve from ſins true penitents, to bind and excommunicate ſuch as be guilty in manifeſt crimes and ſins, to order and conſecrate others in the ſame office, is fully aſſerted. See Burnet, vol. i. Addenda, fol. 321.

Even Cranmer's commiſſion reluctantly admitted ſome rights, "divinitus commiſſa;" and Gardiner in his work, de vera Obedientia, maintains that the ſword of the Church extends to teaching and excommunication. The Erudition of a Chriſtian

indeed, and ſuch juriſdiction, it was perceived, could only be of a ſpiritual nature; importing a right to offer and to withhold the ſacraments; to admit and to reject from the fellowſhip of Chriſt's kingdom; to ſuperintend its diſcipline and adminiſtration, and to impart to others that authority, which they had been empowered by their commiſſion to exerciſe.

The excluſive right of the Clergy to denounce the ſpiritual threats, and to unfold the ſpiritual promiſes of the Goſpel, to judge of offences, and to apply the ſentence of excluſion from, or admiſſion to, Chriſt's kingdom was not invaded: underſtood however it was, that this right implied * no undefined power of ſetting up new principles of rejection or

tian Man allowed that the functions of the Clergy conſiſted in preaching and adminiſtering the ſacraments, in the power of binding and looſing, that is, in giving abſolution, and admitting the penitent to church-communion, and in excommunicating thoſe who refuſe to be reclaimed. The ſpiritual act of inſtitution is preſerved as a preliminary to induction.

* The 25th of Henry VIII. confirmed the 5th of Rich. II. and 2 Henry V. c. 7. by which the biſhops were allowed to be judges of hereſy, though it repealed 2 Henry IV. c. 15. which left too much to the judgment of the biſhops, not requiring legal proceedings. All theſe ſtatutes were repealed by 1 Ed. VI. c. 12. and after their revival under Mary, were abrogated a ſecond time by 1 Eliz. c. 1. which eſtabliſhed the High Commiſſion Court. The civil ſanctions annexed to theſe ſtatutes authorized the interference of the Legiſlature.

favour,

favour, or of departing from that criterion of obedience, and thoſe laws of fellowſhip, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles had eſtabliſhed.

This chief and eſſential right of ſpiritual authority, which is derived from the tranſmitted claims of the miniſtry, and which conſtitutes the baſis of the inherent juriſdiction of the ſacred order, was accurately defined and duly guarded in the declarations and offices of the eſtabliſhed Church. Claiming no infallibility of judgment *, though profeſſing a ſacred and diſintereſted call, the lawful miniſters of the Church pretended not to that plenitude of power, which had been delegated, doubtleſs with perſonal reſtriction, to thoſe who had received a miraculons inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, for their immediate direction; qualifying them with unerring ſentence to pronounce on the remiſſion or retention of ſin, as to the

* The words of our Lord, "Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt," adopted into our Ordination Service, may be juſtified, not only as ſupplicatory, but as in ſome degree authoritative on the part of thoſe who have a due appointment to convey the miniſterial powers in their ordinary extent, and may preſume on the divine ratification of a form conſecrated in agreement with the ſacred inſtitution. See Burnet, p. ii. p. 145. The words, "Do you truſt you have the Holy Ghoſt," do not imply the neceſſity of a miraculous impulſe, but ſuch pious reſolution and views, as may be ſuited to the faithful diſcharge of the miniſterial office.

deciſion

deciſion of an eternal judgment; to affix or to diſſolve the unqueſtionable ſeal of condemnation *. Aſſerting only the miniſterial and excluſive right of applying God's promiſes and threats, they aſpired to exerciſe the office of admitting to, and of expelling from, the communion of Chriſt's earthly kingdom, reſpectively, thoſe who revered or diſobeyed his laws, and as they rightly adminiſtered ſuch ſervice, to releaſe from, or to expoſe to the divine wrath, thoſe, whom they addreſſed †.

So

* Theſe pretenſions were ſometimes aſſerted in the moſt unqualified terms. In a work called Cranmer's Catechiſm, and ſuppoſed to be written or tranſlated by him from a Latin verſion of a German book, it is affirmed, that when the true Church by its miniſters doth promiſe remiſſion of our ſins, and here on earth doth abſolve us, we may ſurely truſt, that in heaven alſo, and before God, we are abſolved and pardoned. It is farther ſtated in the work, that God hath given the keys of the kingdom of heaven and authority of forgiving ſins to his miniſters. See Collyer Hiſt. vol. ii. p. ii. b. iv. fol. 251. It ſhould have been added, that the abſolution is valid, only as we are entitled to it, of which the Church has no infallible power to decide. See alſo a too looſe account in the Inſtitution of the Chriſtian man, "which words being ſpoken by the prieſt on earth, "he ought to believe that they ſhall be ratified in heaven, and "that he is already freely pardoned for the merit of Chriſt's "paſſion." See the Biſhop of Cheſter's Edit. of Nowell's Catechiſm, p. 7.

† Jewelli Apolog. All muſt admit that the ſentence of excluſion from Chriſt's Church, when duly adminiſtered, is ratified by eternal ſanctions. But ſome writers ſeem to diſpute the power of the Church to apply by its miniſters forgiveneſs to the individual. Thus Wheatly conceives that the words

So far the rulers of a ſpiritual kingdom ſtill may pronounce with reluctance that ſentence, which, while it excludes from the communion of Chriſt's faith on earth, thoſe, who obſtinately reject his laws, cloſes on their guilty view, the gates of eternal ſalvation; or by "the miniſtry of reconcilia-"tion," cheerfully proclaims to the unfeignedly dejected and contrite mind, thoſe terms of forgiveneſs, which are the pledges of God's everlaſting pardon.

That our Church claims no more, even where it has been cenſured as aſſuming a too lofty tone, may be proved on examination of the ſtrongeſt form of abſolution which it employs*; in which is aſſerted only the power

words of St. John, ch. xx. ver. 23. confer only a power of excommunicating and abſolving; and that no authority can be urged from hence, for the applying of God's pardon to the conſcience of a ſinner, or for abſolving him any otherwiſe than from the cenſures of the Church. And yet afterwards he allows that the favour or diſpleaſure of God is not wholly unconcerned in thoſe acts of the Church, and argues from Matth. ch. xviii. ver. 18. that whatever ſentence ſhall be duly paſſed, ſhall be ratified by him whom they repreſent. It is to be lamented that the inconſiſtencies on the ſubject of abſolution, in a book ſo deſervedly in general uſe, ſhould not have been rectified in the later editions. See ſect. v.

* See the abſolution in the Service for the Viſitation of the Sick. Wheatly favours the opinion, that the Church here intends only to remit its own cenſures. But the reaſon aſſigned for thus reſtricting the abſolution ſeems to be unſufficient, ſince the deſire

power of the Church, to abſolve ſinners who "truly repent and believe in Chriſt *," and

deſire of pardon, which in the Collect that follows the ſinner is repreſented to entertain, is the deſire which he had before expreſſed as a preliminary to abſolution, and which he might ſtill entertain, without diſtruſt of the prieſt's authority, in the hope of God's ratification of the ſentence pronounced. The perſon prayed for is not ſuppoſed to be under any cenſure; and it is perhaps more reaſonable to imagine, that the Church deſigns, in this ancient form, to convey to the afflicted penitent the aſſurance of God's pardon, on the ſuppoſition of the exiſtence of repentance and faith; by a formal act which Chriſt has promiſed to ratify; conſiſtently with which the prayer of the prieſt may be offered up for the revival of a decayed nature, and for the preſervation of the ſick member in the unity of the church. The prieſt does not, as has been urged, pretend to any intuitive knowledge of the human heart, but decides on the preſumption of the ſincerity of the repentance which is profeſſed. Biſhop Bancroft aſſured King James at the Hampton-Court conference, that the Confeſſions of Augſburg, Bohemia, and Saxony, retained this form; and that Calvin approved ſuch a general confeſſion and abſolution as was uſed in the Church of England. The King called it an apoſtolical ordinance.

* It deſerves to be noticed, that in the American Liturgy this form is omitted in the ſervice of the Viſitation of the Sick, and no direction is given for particular confeſſion or abſolution. In the form for the Viſitation of Priſoners, is a direction to the miniſter to exhort the criminal to a particular confeſſion of the ſins for which he is condemned: after which, the miniſter is to *declare* to him the pardoning mercy of God, in the form which is uſed in the Communion Service, which is the ſame as that in our Communion Service, and which is in ſupplicating form. Notwithſtanding therefore the compilers of this Liturgy profeſs that their Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England, in any eſſential point of diſcipline or worſhip; they ſeem to have deſigned to relinquiſh particular confeſſion of ſins, and the authoritative power of abſolution in the prieſthood—its eſſential and important claim, and without which the ſacerdotal commiſſion is deſtitute of ſanctions.

the

the prieſt, in virtue of ſuch authority, acts only on the ſuppoſition of the exiſtence of repentance, in the perſon who humbly and heartily deſires abſolution, and for whom the prayer of faith has been made; nor does it appear that our Church deſigns, in any of her ſervice, to lower her authority in this reſpect, whatever difference of expreſſion or mode of aſſurance may be employed; but that it uniformly exerts an appropriate power in virtue of its excluſive privilege *, to be exerciſed by its miniſters, upon ſuch grounds of deciſion as the human judgment can form, and to be confirmed by divine ratification, only ſo far as it is adminiſtered in conſiſtency with circumſtances eſtimated by fallible obſervation.

* Some have conſidered the abſolution, or remiſſion of ſins, in the daily ſervice, to be only a declaratory form. See Bennet. But it is preſumed, that here, as well as in the ſervice of the Viſitation of the Sick, the Church deſigns to exerciſe an appropriate and appointed power, of *pronouncing* and conveying pardon, on the expreſs condition of repentance and faith. As it is an eſpecial and authoritative act of the fully appointed and authorized miniſters of the Church, it ſeems not to have been deſigned, that a deacon ſhould pronounce it. Our ordination gives to the deacon authority, only to read the Goſpel, and to preach; but ſeems to conſider an eſpecial guidance of the Holy Ghoſt, as ſtill neceſſary for the diſcreet uſe of the power of abſolution, ſaying to the prieſt, "Receive the Holy Ghoſt: whoſe "ſins thou doſt forgive, they are forgiven; and whoſe ſins thou "doſt retain, they are retained."

A pecu-

A peculiar right then, annexed to the ſacred office, eſſential to the preſervation of a government deſtitute of temporal ſanctions, and neceſſary for the reſtoration of thoſe, who after baptiſm decline, is aſſerted to be exerciſed not with the peremptory and judicial deciſion of an infallible diſcernment, but ſtill with an authoritative application, on conditions preſumed or expreſſed. A power derived from the Apoſtles, and different from that which every Diſciple of Chriſt may aſſume; to be adminiſtered with relinquiſhment only of their intuitive confidence, ſufficient to convey terror or conſolation to the mind, when conſcious of the juſtice of the declaration, as then unqueſtionably valid, and ſure of Divine ratification; but impoſing no indiſpenſible obligation on the individual to conſider his ſalvation as dependent on the ſentence, by ſealing it with a ſacramental importance, or by repreſenting it as of more than diſcretionary utility *.

This

* Our Church, in the Exhortation before the Communion, directs, "that if any perſon cannot quiet his own conſcience by ſelf-examination and public confeſſion of ſins, he ſhould apply to ſome diſcreet miniſter, that he may receive the benefit of abſolution," &c. So in the Viſitation of the Sick, the prieſt is directed to move the ſick perſon to make eſpecial confeſſion of his ſins; and when he feels his conſcience troubled with any

This right, challenged by the miniſters of a true Church, is claimed in virtue of their

weighty matter, the prieſt is to abſolve him, if he humbly and heartily deſire it. In the firſt book of Edward was a clauſe, ſince expunged, in which it is ſaid, that "ſuch as ſhould be "ſatisfied with a general confeſſion, ſhould not be offended "with them that do uſe to their farther ſatisfying the auricular "ſecret confeſſion to the prieſt: and that thoſe who thought it "needful, to the quieting of their own conſciences, particular-"ly to open their ſins to the prieſt, ſhould not be offended with "thoſe that are ſatisfied with their humble confeſſion, and the "general confeſſion of the Church; but in all things follow "and keep the rule of charity." Our Church did not mean to diſcountenance private confeſſion and abſolution, but the mockery and indulgence of auricular confeſſion and remiſſion. It preferred public forms, not upon any different ground of their reſpecting merely a releaſement from Church cenſures, upon which principle they would be nugatory when no ſentence has been uttered, and no ſcandal given, but as they are more general and are not liable to abuſe. On ſuitable occaſions, the private abſolution is approved upon the ſame principles of regard to a final remiſſion of ſins; and there is no foundation for Dr. Stebbing's fancy, that private abſolution was continued merely in compliance with popiſh prejudice. If the order be now uſeleſs for private abſolution, when required before the communion, there are ſome, it is preſumed, ſtill living, who remember its utility; and private abſolution to the ſick is now in daily uſe, to the ſerious conſolation of many in moments of ſevereſt trial. See Dr. Stebbing's Brief Account of Prayer and the Lord's Supper, p. 56. Private abſolution may be very ſalutary, though not indiſpenſibly neceſſary to ſalvation; and it is never allowed in our Church, but on the expreſs condition of unfeigned repentance. It ſhould be obſerved, that Dr. Stebbing admits, in concluſion, that a power to declare forgiveneſs upon the terms of the Goſpel is challenged by our Church, and wrapt up in the miniſterial office. It is well known that Dr. Reynolds, who in many reſpects diſapproved of the regulations of our Church, received abſolution on his death-bed with impoſition of hands from Dr. Holland. See Combes on the Abſolution in his Companion to the Temple.

appointment

appointment to their high office by thoſe lawful rulers who have derived a tranſmitted juriſdiction in regular ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles. "The honour no man taketh unto "himſelf, but he that is called of God *"— by ſuch means as he has eſtabliſhed. A miſſion ratified by them who have "autho- "rity in the congregation" to ſend, muſt be eſſential †, as we collect from precedent ‡; and the miniſterial privileges during ſucceſſive centuries were ſuppoſed to flow only by conveyance of epiſcopal ordination ||. They cannot conſiſtently

* Heb. ch. v. ver. 4. This appears to be an univerſal rule applied to Chriſt, and applicable to the miniſtry, reſpecting ſucceſſion. See Rogers's Review, p. 154—159.

† Rom. ch. x. ver. 15. Rogers's, p. 159, 160. 23 Article.

‡ Barnabas and Paul, though perſonally called by the Holy Ghoſt, were ſeparated for the work of the miniſtry by the miniſters of the Church, by faſting and prayer, and impoſition of hands See Acts xiii.

|| The advocates for Preſbyterian ordination would do well to conſider wherefore Titus was left at Crete to ordain, and Timothy ſent to Epheſus, if the laying on of the hands of the preſbytery were ſufficient. Timothy derived the gift of the Holy Ghoſt only from St. Paul, however the preſbytery might concur in the impoſition of hands. Comp. 1 Tim. ch. iv. ver. 14, and 2 Tim. ch. i. ver. 6; as the council of Carthage conferred this privilege of the preſbytery, Concil. Car. 4. Car. reſerving the benediction to the biſhop therein. Hieron. Ep. 85, ad Evagr. Poteſtas ergo peccatorum remittendorum Apoſtolis data eſt, et eccleſiis quas illi a Chriſto miſſi conſtituerunt, et epiſcopis qui eis ordinatione vicaria ſucceſſerunt. Hoſtes autem unius catholicæ eccleſiæ in qua nos ſumus, et adverſarii noſtri qui Apoſtolis ſucceſſimus, ſacerdotia ſibi illicita contra nos vendi-

conſiſtently be underſtood to be derived from appointment to the ſacred office by thoſe who have not themſelves received the authority which they pretend to delegate; and whatever extraordinary meaſures of divine indulgence may be conceded to unavoidable departure from apoſtolical inſtitution, the confidence of wanton deviation muſt, to ſay the leaſt, be preſumptuous and full of danger; and tends to ſanction the vain pretenſions of every precarious ſhepherd who climbeth into the fold, and whoſe voice the ſheep can with no well-grounded ſecurity obey; who invadeth an office which he hath no aſſurance that Chriſt will ratify, or rather which it is evident that Chriſt muſt condemn as in diſregard of his appointment.

This eminent prerogative of the ſpiritual

cantes, et altaria profana ponentes, quid aliud ſunt quam Chore, Dathan et Abiron &c. Cyprian, Ep. 75. The validity of preſbyterian ordination has been ſometimes contended for in caſes of neceſſity; and irregular miniſters were frequently allowed to officiate in the ſcarcity of paſtors in Elizabeth's reign. Biſhop Bancroft inſiſted that the Scotch preſbyters, who had not received epiſcopal ordination, might be conſecrated in the reign of James. It has however been juſtly condemned in all caſes not unavoidable, as an unauthoriſed deviation from the practice of the Church for fifteen centuries; and the conſecration of the Scotch biſhops was chiefly juſtifiable upon the idea that the whole epiſcopal character might be conveyed at one ordination.

power,

power, the right of applying God's threats and promiſes, may be conſidered as inalienable from the miniſtry; which, under no circumſtances of connection with the State, can be ſurrendered or relinquiſhed. A privilege it is, derived from a Divine commiſſion; which, as it affects no temporal intereſt, and beareth no ſword but that of the Spirit, is to be exerciſed independently of all temporal power. Separate from, or connected with the State, it muſt preſerve its independent vigour; incapable of ſuffering from external changes, and retaining its unperiſhable force, as doth the ſoul its native energies, in conjunction with or divorced from the body. The confirmation which it receives from the State, it receives as a tribute of voluntary co-operation; deſigned to ſtrengthen the preſent impreſſion of its ſentence, and not to ſuperſede its authority*. The decrees of expulſion from viſible com-

* The miniſters of the Church may certainly exerciſe their power of ſpiritual juriſdiction againſt every perſon, even againſt the ſupreme magiſtrate, who may merit excluſion from communion; as they excommunicated Andronicus, Governor of Ptolemais, and cloſed the gates of the Church againſt the Emperors Philip and Theodoſius, till public teſtimony of repentance had been given. See Syneſ. Epiſt. 58, ad Epiſ. p. 198. Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. lib. iii. cap. 33. They tranſgreſſed their power only by attempting to annex to the ſentence temporal ſanctions, and penalties not authoriſed by the community.

munion, which as a conſequence of this authority are uttered by the miniſtry, are to be regulated by the magiſtrate only as civil effects are annexed by him to its declarations. The legiſlative powers of diſcipline, and the mingled rights of juriſdiction, which in conſiſtency with, and dependency on ſuch authority are exerted, muſt be reſtricted in due ſubſerviency to temporal government, without the ſanction of which, aſſemblies ought not to be gathered together*, or civil penalties to be inflicted.

While the original rights of the ſacred order, and even thoſe acquired privileges which were not unfriendly to the intereſts of the community, were duly reverenced in agreement with the principles of the Reformation, the claim of the miniſtry to direct in the expoſition of the terms of communion, was not overlooked. That the doctrines of faith and the forms of public worſhip which they commended, ſhould be canvaſſed by the legiſlature; and be accepted only as they were judged to be conſiſtent with the inſtructions of Revelation, was but an effect of the ſober exerciſe of that conſcience which Chriſt has

* 1 Maccab. ch. xiv. ver. 44.

left

eft unfettered and free, and the legitimate expreſſion of that concurrence which had been deemed neceſſary in the primitive Church.

That the right of excluding from the communion of the national worſhip, thoſe who violated the fundamental laws of its conſtitution, ſhould be exerted only upon known principles and expreſſed limitations, was but a charitable proviſion. The ſentence was to be uttered by its appointed * and accuſtomed judges †; but to prevent ſuch vague and arbitrary

* John, ch. xx. ver. 21—23. Titus, ch. iii. ver. 10. The right of the biſhops of the primitive Church to grant or withhold communion was ſo clear, that no Chriſtian was admitted to communion, in a foreign congregation, without credential letters from his own biſhop, which were called Literæ commendatoriæ, communicatoriæ or dimiſſoriæ. Theſe letters were ſtyled alſo Literæ formatæ, and were written with peculiar forms and marks, to prevent ſurreptitious recommendations. See Bingham, book ii. ch. 4.

† Statute 5 and 6 of Edward VI. It is provided in 29 C. 2. c. 9, which aboliſhed the writ De Hæretico comburendo, that nothing in the ſaid act ſhall extend to take away or abridge the juriſdiction of Proteſtant archbiſhops or biſhops, or any other judges of eccleſiaſtical courts, in caſes of atheiſm, blaſphemy, hereſy, or ſchiſm, &c. but that they may puniſh the ſame according to his Majeſty's eccleſiaſtical laws, by excommunication, deprivation, and other cenſures not extending to death. Upon the abrogation of ancient ſtatutes againſt heretics, the cognizance of hereſy and puniſhment of heretics returned into its ancient channel and bounds; and now belongs to the archbiſhop as metropolitan of the province, and to every biſhop within his own proper dioceſe, who are to puniſh only by eccleſiaſtical

bitrary conſtructions as fatal remembrance had regiſtered in the records of perſecution *, it was juſtly determined that the ſpeculative line of hereſy ſhould be in ſome degree defined by the ſtandard of the Scriptures, and the poſitive deciſions of the primitive councils †. The zeal of religious conviction was prudently tempered by deliberate regulation; and

cenſures. And ſo, ſaith Lord Coke, it was put in ure in all Queen Elizabeth's reign; and ſo it was reſolved by the chief juſtice, chief baron, and two other of the judges, upon conſultation in the 9 Jac. in the caſe of Legate, Gibſon, 353. No perſon can be indicted or impeached for hereſy before any temporal judge, or other that hath temporal juriſdiction. Burn, Eccleſ. Law, article Hereſy.

* Under the term of hereſy the Romiſh Church perſecuted every deviation from its own arbitrary decrees. See Lyndewode, cap. de Hæret. Fox's Martyrs, &c. The Canon Law, with dreadful latitude, reckoned upon 88 ſorts of hereſy. Ayl. Par. In England, by 2 Hen. IV. c. 15, paſſed at a time when perſecution obtained its chief powers, the dioceſan might by his own authority convict heretics, and the ſheriff was bound ex officio to commit them to the flames if required, unleſs the convict abjured.

† B. 9. 1 Eliz. c. 1. Hereſy was limited to what had been adjudged to be ſo by the authority of the canonical Scriptures, or ſome of the four firſt general councils; or ſome other general councils wherein the ſame was declared to be hereſy, by the expreſs and plain words of the ſaid canonical Scriptures, or ſuch as ſhould be judged to be hereſy by the High Court of Parliament, with the aſſent of the clergy in convocation. It has been thought that ſtill too much latitude was allowed in the conſtruction of hereſy by this act; which, as it created the High Commiſſion Court, was repealed: though its rules are conſidered as good directions in the eccleſiaſtical courts. The four firſt general councils defined hereſy with great accuracy.

decrees

decrees were no longer to be delivered out at the ſuggeſtion of party intereſt or private malice, to looſen the ties or diſſolve the connections of ſocial life. Reaſonable it was that the Church ſhould iſſue its excommunications, as in the pureſt ages *, with concurrence of the whole congregation, whoſe obſervance could alone give preſent validity to the ſentence †; and in conſideration of the political ſanctions annexed to its decrees ‡, ſubmit the regulation and extent of its effects to the direction of the civil power §.

Where the civil power has itſelf aſſumed the right of excommunication, it has not

* Matt. ch. xviii. ver. 16, 17. 1 Cor. ch. v. ver. 2—13. 2 Cor. ch. iv. ver. 10. 2 Theſſal. ch. iii. ver. 6—14. Gal. ch. v. ver. 12. Clem. Rom. Epiſt.

† Thus the archbiſhop and clergy in the reign of Henry I. who excommunicated the breakers of the Great Charter, profeſſed to do it in the preſence, and by the aſſent of the King, the Earl of Cromwell his brother, the Earls of Norfolk and Suffolk, Marſhal of England, and other peers.

‡ An excommunicated perſon is diſabled from ſerving in any court, and an excommunication may be pleaded in abatement of his action.

§ 25 Hen. VIII. c. 14. 32 Hen. VIII. c. 26. 34 Hen. VIII. c. 1. 35 Hen. VIII. c. 1, 2. Excommunication, to have a civil effect, muſt be pronounced by the biſhop, and ſignified by him to chancery, whence the writ De excommunicato capiendo is iſſued to the ſheriff, to impriſon the party without bail or mainprize, till he hath made ſatisfaction to the Church. If a non inventus is retained, a capias is to be awarded, with a proclamation for appearance within ſix days, on pain of pecuniary fines with increaſing weight.

been

been on the preſumption of any ſpiritual authority * ; but either by an exceſs of the temporal juriſdiction, or in virtue of that conceded ſupremacy, which the ſovereign may be empowered to exerciſe with the concurrence of the Church, of which the judicial ſentence has been at the ſame time required †.

By the principles of the reformation, therefore, no ſpiritual rights of the Clergy were infringed; the hallowed laws of the divine founders of the Church were regarded with reverential awe; the civil power lent its

* Biſhop Jewel thus deſcribes the limits of Elizabeth's claim. "She preacheth not, ſhe miniſtereth not the ſacrament, "ſhe doth neither excommunicate, nor abſolve from excom- "munication, ſhe ſitteth not to give ſentence in ſpiritual courts, "ſhe challengeth not the diſpenſation of the keys of the king- "dom of heaven, her majeſty is ſupreme governor over her "ſubjects. The Biſhops within her realm are ſubjects to her." View of a ſeditious Bull, p. xiv. Can. 39.

† By 31ſt of Edward I. when no infringement of the ſpiritual power was apprehended, it was directed, that the archbiſhops and biſhops ſhould pronounce the ſentence of excommunication againſt thoſe who by word, deed, or council, ſhould do any thing contrary to the charters of the liberties of England, or of the foreſts, or in any point break or undo them. In ſome ſtatutes of Edward VI. the right of excommunication was aſſumed by the civil power, 5 and 6 Edw. ch. iv. The ſpiritual power may by its independent authority excommunicate for ſpiritual offences, but the civil ſanctions to its ſentence muſt be derived from the ſtate; and upon this principle the general interference of the legiſlature is juſtified. Burn repreſents a general act of pardon to have the power of releaſing from the penalties of excommunication, meaning doubtleſs from the civil penalties. See alſo Articuli Cleri, 9. Edw. II. Art. 7.

aid,

aid to ſupport their effect and influence; provided for their promulgation, and continued to countenance the claims of thoſe appointed to communicate them. With the miniſters it reſts, "to ſpeak, and to exhort, and to re-"buke with all authority," to vindicate themſelves from contemptuous diſregard *; as to aſpire to no arbitrary controul, ſo not to ſhrink from thoſe well founded rights, which they derive from their commiſſion; nor from that lawful power, with which the ſtate hath judged it expedient to give preſent effect to their juſt deciſions.

That all jealouſy of an undue aſſumption of temporal power in the Clergy is now removed, or muſt reſt on ancient prejudice or ſuſpicious reſentment, the friends of true religion may rejoice: ſtill however may the ſober and diſintereſted zeal of fidelity to Chriſt's ſervice be allowed to regret, that a reluctance to have recourſe to compulſive meaſures, ſhould have acquieſced in the neglect, even of thoſe temperate exertions of legitimate authority, which the diſcipline of the Church, and the welfare of the community, commend.

* Titus, ch. ii. ver. 15.

Whatever

Whatever conceſſions may have been timidly made in accommodation to a relaxed ſyſtem, the theory is falſe and dangerous, which ſanctions the neglect of ſalutary laws.

In the regulation of the ſpiritual departments, no uniform and impartial maintenance of regimen will be cenſured or diſregarded. In the general adminiſtration of the eccleſiaſtical juriſdiction, the civil power is not unwilling to ſecond the diſcreet exertions of a lawful authority *. Unwiſe were the council, that would ſtimulate to any rigorous infliction of human laws, thoſe who, by gentleneſs and forbearance, ſhould encourage the growth of the religious principle: but the warmeſt aſſerters of intellectual freedom have admitted the propriety of reſtraining public offences. Thoſe who have had no wiſh to revive the ſalutary diſcipline of the Church,

* Blackſtone aſſures us, that the notion is groundleſs, which ſome entertain, that the courts of Weſtminſter Hall are at open variance with thoſe of Doctors Commons. It is true, he obſerves, that they are ſometimes obliged to uſe a parental authority, in correcting the exceſſes of thoſe inferior courts, and in keeping them within their legal bounds: but on the other hand, they afford them a parental aſſiſtance, in repreſſing the inſolence of contumacious delinquents, and in reſcuing their juriſdiction from that contempt, which, for want of ſufficient compulſive power, would be otherwiſe ſure to attend it. Comm. vol. iii. ch. 7.

have

have contended, that its eccleſiaſtical cenſures might be iſſued with a leſs timid, and leſs feeble voice; and that the interrogatories of its official enquiry, ſhould not be repeated with mere formal and ineffectual injunction. Conſiderations of expediency and ſeaſon, and a regard to the prevailing temper of ſociety, muſt doubtleſs be allowed to operate: but it muſt not be forgotten, that the fear of preſent puniſhment, and the ſhame of preſent diſgrace, when diſcreetly worked upon, may contribute to reformation of manners. Powers delegated in truſt for the correction of prevailing immoralities, when exerciſed with conſcientious and diſpaſſionate regard to the welfare of ſociety, muſt be honourable; and cannot indeed be relinquiſhed without a deſertion of duty, which the extent of evil and the deſpair of remedy will not juſtify.

Thoſe, however, who in lenient compliance with prevailing abuſes, retreat from exertions of authority, which might be deemed invidious by perſons whom no moderation can reconcile to coercive reſtraints, in concerns of religious obligation, ſhould at leaſt, as knowing the "terror of the Lord," with more anxious ſolicitude, perſuade men on thoſe motives of eternal conſideration, which

they

they are eſpecially appointed to proclaim; they ſhould exhort and convince gainſayers, not neglecting ſuch rebuke, even ſharp rebuke, as eſtabliſhed character and aſcendant influence may render impreſſive, eſpecially towards thoſe "unruly and vain talkers and "deceivers," who ſubvert eſtabliſhed principles *; and not admitting to the communion, thoſe, whoſe notorious and open depravity is the cauſe of public ſcandal.

Thoſe alſo among the laity, who are loudeſt to condemn every temporal ſanction, deſigned to repreſs the inſolent, and to diſcountenance the flagitious, ſhould at leaſt be ready to teſtify their reverence for that ſpiritual authority, which our Lord unqueſtionably deſigned for the permanent ſupport and adminiſtration of his kingdom; ſhould be careful, that they weaken not real claims, by complaints againſt fictitious pretenſions; nor labour to invalidate the influence of a circumſcribed authority, by imputing to it the ſcandal of ancient exceſſes †. Thoſe who

* Tit. ch. i. 9—13.

† Few, it is hoped, will reaſon ſo faſt as Hume, who aſſerts ſomewhat incautiouſly as a philoſophical hiſtorian, that "the cruelty and treachery, which attended the puniſhment of John Huſs and Jerome of Prague, prove the melancholy truth, that toleration is none of the virtues of prieſts, in any form of eccleſiaſtical government," ch. xix. A. 1422.

would

would diſparage the ſacred profeſſion, muſt go back to former ages, for intolerance of zeal or extravagance of power; and the malevolent attempt, but betrays a prejudice, which will not diſcriminate, and a deſign, which aims at a darker purpoſe. In the perſon of his miniſters, they impeach an authority derived from Chriſt; diſregarding the precepts of the Son, who "being made per-"fect, became the author of eternal ſalvation "to all that obey him *."

* Heb. ch. iv. v. 9.

SERMON V.

MATT. xxviii. 20.

Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

TO the Diſciples, whom he was about to leave, and to whom he had revealed the proſpect of ſufferings and of ſorrow, our Saviour judged it expedient alſo to diſcloſe the gleams of conſolation. With deſign to ſoothe them, in their affliction, for the loſs which they were about to ſuſtain in his departure, he promiſed to ſend to them "another Com-"forter *," who ſhould abide with them for ever: and in order to encourage them in the difficulties and perſecution which they were to endure in the publication of his faith, he furniſhed the aſſurance of a perma-

* John, ch. xiv. ver. 16, 17, 23. ch. xv. ver. 26.

nent countenance and protection, to be experienced in the omnipresence of his Divine nature *.

That the foundation of the Church which Christ had established should remain solid and immoveable amidst every change; that "the "gates of hell should not prevail against it;" and that its duration should survive the passing away of the material world, was declared on other occasions, in a strain of similar encouragement. Such intimations must have inspired with cheerful sentiments those, who might have been otherwise depressed with the reflection, that without human assistance they were to be opposed by every earthly power, and who in the confidence alone of Divine armour could be expected to stand against the "wiles "of the devil †," and "to wrestle," not merely "against flesh and blood, but against "principalities, against powers, against the "rulers of the darkness of this world, against "spiritual wickedness in high places ‡."

* The omnipresence of Christ may be collected from Col. ch. i. ver. 17. and Heb. ch. i. ver. 6. as well as from the text; and is admitted by Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and other Fathers. See Bull, Def. Fid. Nicæn. § 14. c. iii.

† Matt. ch. xvi. ver. 18. ch. xxiv. ver. 31. Luke, ch. xxi. ver. 33.

‡ Eph. ch. vi. ver. 11, 12.

That

That the Apoſtles and earlier Diſciples of Chriſt derived conſiderable ſupport and animation from contemplating the extent of theſe promiſes, as well as from benefiting by their effects, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe. The heavenly favour which was to ſhine upon them, was not that of any preciſe deſcription, or uniform influence. A general guidance, a ſuperintendent care, was all that the Divine aſſurances had implied; and accordingly they ſoon underſtood that there were "diverſities "of gifts, though the ſame ſpirit;" and collected from the earlieſt events of their miniſtry, that the perſonal protection, which they were to experience, in the afflictions that they had been taught to expect, was to be indefinite and variable: that though in Chriſt's name they ſhould "caſt out devils, "and ſpeak with new tongues, ſhould take up "ſerpents, and if they drank any deadly thing, "it ſhould not hurt them *;" yet that in perſecution they ſhould "flee from city to city;" and that he who might eſcape through every viciſſitude of danger, the violence of that "city which ſtoned her prophets," "the "perils of the wilderneſs," the perils of a

* Mark, ch. xvi. ver. 17, 18, and Acts, ch. xxviii. ver. 3.

thrice-ſuffered ſhipwreck, and the venomous hold of the viper, might be permitted, as he had declared himſelf ready, to be martyred for the name of the Lord Jeſus *; that what they ſhould ſpeak, though ſuggeſted by the Spirit, would often ſerve but as a teſtimony againſt thoſe who rejected its addreſs †, and perſecuted its ſervants unto death.

Beholding without jealouſy the "differences of adminiſtration" which they perceived to be ſubſervient to the deſigns of their Lord, and regardleſs of perſonal affliction in their zeal for the promotion of the Goſpel, they doubted not of the final accompliſhment of God's promiſes; and demonſtrated, in the conſtancy which they diſplayed, the vigour and influence of the Spirit which ſupported them.

That the general ſuperintendence which gave efficacy to their labours, and rendered even their ſufferings conducive to the eſtabliſhment and confirmation of the faith, ſhould continue to ſecure a ſucceſſion of the miniſtry, and to aſſiſt its exertions, they had

* Acts, ch. xxi. ver. 13.
† Matt. ch. x. ver. 17, 18, 30.

ample

ample cauſe of confidence to believe; ſince Chriſt had directed them to "go and teach "all nations," promiſing at the ſame time a protecting care, which ſhould continue, not alone, during the preaching of the Apoſtles, not alone, as hath been idly aſſerted, till the end of the Jewiſh age, but through every ſucceſſive generation; till all nations ſhould be baptized into the univerſal kingdom, which ſhould ſubſiſt in the diſpenſations of eternity.

Of the continuance of this protecting care no reaſonable doubt can be entertained. Of the ſpecific import and latitude of the promiſe, different opinions have been formed, not ſeldom erroneous, and in proportion prejudicial in their influence.

A curſory view of the errors which have been engendered by a too ſanguine and unreſtrained interpretation of our Saviour's words, as connected with aſſurances of a ſimilar deſcription, will ſerve to demonſtrate the importance of that juſt conſtruction which was adopted at the Reformation; and which tended with conſiderable effect to ſtrengthen the foundation choſen for the re-eſtabliſhment of the ſincere doctrines of Chriſtianity.

A groſs and carnal expectation of a perſonal return of our Lord, to produce the immediate reſtoration of a temporal ſovereignty to Iſrael, appears at firſt to have exiſted even in the minds of the Apoſtles, when commanded to wait at Jeruſalem for "the promiſe of the Father *." It was built probably upon thoſe ſplendid deſcriptions of Chriſt's kingdom, which the ancient prophets had furniſhed in repreſentation of its final triumph; and was perhaps in ſome degree confirmed by a miſconſtruction of thoſe diſcourſes of our Lord, that related to the period which ſhould ſucceed his ſecond advent †. The Apoſtles however, though their intruſive curioſity was diſcouraged by Chriſt, were ſoon enlightened by the Holy Ghoſt, to diſcover that theſe viſions of future glory were to be referred to a diſtant æra, when the blindneſs "which had happened to Iſrael ſhould be done away," and "the fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in ‡." That "the

* Acts, ch. i. ver. 6, where ſome ſuppoſe that αποκαθιστανεις ſhould be rendered, *appoint* or *eſtabliſh*.

† Matt. ch. vi. ver. 10. ch. xxvi. ver. 29. Luke, ch. xxi. ver. 31.

‡ Rom. ch. xi. ver. 24, 25. Pſ. ii. ver. 8. Iſaiah, ch. xxxv. lx. lxv. Jer. ch. iii. ver. 13—17. Ezek. ch. xxxvi. ver.

" the Prince of Life" was " received by the " Heavens till the time of the reſtitution of " all things*," and that the perfect righteouſneſs, which was to be " the manifeſtation of " the ſons of God†," glorified by his perſonal preſence, was to be looked for under " new " heavens and a new earth ‡."

Leaving to the ſcoffers and ſenſual followers of their own luſts to enquire after the promiſe of Chriſt's coming, with premature and incredulous deriſion, they underſtood that for the advancement of his kingdom, holineſs and godly converſation ſhould be promoted §; and looked only to thoſe immediate effects of Chriſt's influence; which were amply experienced in the rapid diffuſion of the Goſpel at its firſt riſe, when " its doc- " trine ſhone forth as the morning, and ſent " forth her light afar off ||."

The expectation of a perſonal preſence of Chriſt to preſide over and direct the eſtab-

ver. 24. 36. ch. xxxvii. Zech. ch. viii. ver. 7, 8. Rev. ch. xix. ver. 7, 8. ch. xxi. ver. 2, 9, 10; which allude to effects of Chriſt's kingdom, not fully to be experienced till its univerſal and perfect eſtabliſhment.

* Acts, ch. iii. ver. 21. See alſo Matt. ch. xxvi. ver. 11.

† Rom. ch. viii. ver. 19, 21.

‡ 2 Peter, ch. iii. ver. 13.

§ 2 Peter, ch. iii. ver. 14. || Ecclus. ch. xxiv. ver. 32.

liſhment of his kingdom, appears to have been ſlowly relinquiſhed, as the evangelical diſpenſation diſcloſed its character; though it retained an influence over thoſe whoſe heated imaginations anticipated with eager impatience, the ſecond advent of our Lord; and a too extenſive interpretation of the Divine promiſes continued to excite miſtaken notions of the nature and effect of our Lord's ſuperintendence over his Church.

Among thoſe who underſtood the promiſes to import only a ſpiritual preſence, ſome imagined that the reſult of ſuch ſuperintendence, however inviſibly preſiding over the Church, muſt neceſſarily imply the preſervation of the integrity of all its departments; to be diſplayed on earth with unvaried repreſentation, ſtedfaſt in the ſincerity of its profeſſed faith, and perfect in the purity of its exterior inſtitution and ſervice. Hence, after the fatal ſchiſms which took place in the conteſts of the early ages; when the liberal ſpirit of Chriſtianity contracted its views to a confined circle; each ſeparate aſſembly, arrogating to itſelf the excluſive claim of an uncorrupt ſyſtem of faith and diſcipline, began to entertain ſentiments of hoſtility to thoſe, with whom it had broken communion; and

to

to conſider the moſt trivial differences of opinion as conſtituting inſuperable barriers of diſtinction. Fenced within the narrow boundaries of local prejudice, each contemplated his reſpective diſtrict as the "garden "enclоſed*;" the peculiar province of Chriſt's preſence. Partial traditions reverenced as revealed truths, and national cuſtoms inſenſibly blended with the rites of primitive obſervance, were maintained as doctrines eſſential to ſalvation. The intemperate zeal of bigotry was kindled; and the blind fury of perſecution began to rage, which, while it fought for the name, violated every principle of religion.

The notion of a promiſed continuance of an unchanged portraiture of the true Church, to preſerve, under the guidance of Chriſt, perſonally preſiding in his vicar, through all ages, its original form and unfaded glory, its tranſmitted doctrine unclouded, its pure inſtitutions and ceremonies undebaſed, was the falſe ground on which the Roman preſumption reſted the claim of its pretended infallibility; profeſſing to confine itſelf to the rock which Chriſt had eſtabliſhed, while it piled on the

* Canticles, ch. iv. ver. 12.

foundation

foundation of St. Peter's confeſſion the periſhable materials of human vanity *. Hence the antichriſtian boaſt of an earthly ſupremacy, which, though its reputed oracles varied with every intereſt, perſiſted in the frontleſs aſſertion of undeviating truth †; and though the only unerring law of faith was rejected, maintained as Catholic and uniform a Creed, diſcoloured with diverſities which could be concealed alone in ages of darkneſs.

Thoſe who reject the Roman hierarchy, as a vitiated and apoſtate miniſtry, to be excluded from the contemplation of the Chriſtian Church, and yet behold in the latitude of Chriſt's promiſes the preſervation of the perpetuated image of his kingdom, with oſtenſible characters and indefectible faith; have ſometimes referred with deſultory and changing appeal to the ſcattered congregations at different times ſet up with profeſſed reformation from the corruptions of a depraved

* 1 Cor. ch. iii. ver. 12.

† The doctrine is ſtill maintained by ſome in full vigour. "This primacy of the Pope," ſays Mr. Charles Plowden, "imports the power of government by laws; and the promiſe "of Chriſt warrants that theſe laws ſhall not deviate from the "path of eternal truth, or lead the faithful into error." See Conſiderations on the Fallibility of the Holy See, p. 78, as quoted in a Letter to the (Roman) Catholic Clergy, by Sir John Throckmorton.

Church:

Church *: but however cheerfully a tribute of commendation may be paid to thoſe who withdrew from a ſanctuary profaned with vanities, and appear in diſtant ſcenery the advocates of truth and precurſors of reform, it were fond admiration not to deſcry the errors which ſeceſſion did not leave, and which continued often to triumph in the deluſions and hereſies of the ſecluded ſects. It were blind and partial reverence to forget the broken ſucceſſion of the miniſtry; and the frequent interruptions, in the ſhifted repreſentation, and transferred government of the Church.

Waving the minute deſcription of theſe different opinions, and leaving the refutation

* As the Maſſalians or Euchites in the Eaſt; (ſee Cave's Hiſt. Literar. Vol. II. p. 199.) the Waldenſes in the Weſt, who at a very early period cheriſhed the expiring flame of religion, and cultivated a reformed faith in the valleys of Piedmont and Navarre, and in the twelfth century were aſſembled in great numbers under Peter Waldus, at Lyons: the Berengarians, who appeared in France in the eleventh century; the Cathariſts in Italy; the Albigenſes, who were originally colonies of Paulicians from Bulgaria in Thrace; the Wickliffites in England, and the followers of Arnold of Breſcia, of John Huſs, and Jerome of Prague; which ſects are to be commended in many reſpects for withdrawing from exiſting corruptions, and for the doctrines and manners which they diſplayed, but moſt of whom retained errors of faith and practice, which furniſhed ſubject of malignant exultation to the Church which perſecuted them. Leger's Hiſt. Gener. des Egliſes Vaudoiſes. Turretin. Hiſt. & Lardner's Credib. Baronius, A. D. 1148. No. 38.

of

of what may be deemed erroneous in them, to the evidence which will naturally reſult from the eſtabliſhment of truth, it may be expedient to confine our Lord's promiſes within their due limits of interpretation, as unconnected with the revelations of the final glory of the Church; and to illuſtrate their completion, without regard to the exaggerations of miſconception, or the boaſtings of prejudice.

That the Church of God, coeval in its origin with the creation of man *, hath exiſted through all ages in a diſtinct character, illumined by thoſe beams of Divine revelation which it reflects; and that it ſhall continue to flouriſh with various degrees of waining and renovated ſplendor, till the great city, "deſcending out of Heaven," and "having the glory of God †," ſhall appear, no one who reviews the ſacred records, and contemplates the unrolled ſcroll of prophecy, can diſpute ‡: but that the aſſurance of the prophets, or of our Lord, extended to the preſervation

* The Church is repreſented by Nowell to have exiſted before the creation of the heavens and earth; as indeed it did in the religious harmony of the celeſtial ſervants of God. Nowell. Catech. p. 95. Heb. ch. xii. ver. 22, 23.

† Revel. ch. xxi. ver. 10, 12.

‡ See Pearſon, Thorndyke, &c.

of

of any visible image of that Church, to persevere under one form of polity in the unchanged profession of the faith *, must be denied on a just construction of the promises, and on an impartial retrospect of the history of past ages. Sufficient is it, for the vindication of the Divine truth, that in all times Christ has continued to protect the structure of the Church; to secure the distinct administrations and sacramental institutions which he appointed; and so far to irradiate the interior of his Temple by the residence of his glory, as to preserve in the Scriptures the permanency of that "light which lighteth "every man that cometh into the world," and that "to as many as have received him, "to them gave he power to become the "sons of God; even to them that believe "in his name †."

If we look back to the opening of the Divine scheme, we find that the first promise

* It is well known to be an article of the Romish faith, even among those who reject the Papal infallibility, that Christ promised that his Church should never fail to teach the faith which he delivered; and that the doctrine which the Romish Church ever has taught, and now teaches, is the same doctrine which was revealed to the Apostles. See R. Plowden's Letter to a Roman Catholic, p. 42.

† John, ch. i. ver. 9, 12.

which

which aſſured a reſtoration, intimated a previous defeat *. The earlieſt covenant was eſtabliſhed with threats, and the radiant bow, which was ſet in the clouds of diſperſing wrath, was given with conſideration, that "the imagination of man's heart was evil "from his youth †." The deliverance from Egypt, and the preſervation in the wilderneſs, were diſplayed amidſt frequent murmurings of the whole congregation. The golden calf was worſhipped in Horeb, while the tables of teſtimony were written by the finger of God on Sinai; and through every period the "kingdom of prieſts" contained the children of tranſgreſſion ‡.

So alſo the Chriſtian Church, though it was conſecrated with "new and living ways "of entrance," and was to be approached with "a true heart in full aſſurance of "faith," exhibited, even under the immediate preſence of its High Prieſt, no circle of perfect and unmingled characters. In the ſacred band of the Apoſtles were to be found,

* Gen. ch. iii. ver. 15. Heb. ch. xi. ver. 7. Gen. ch. ix. ver. 5, 11.

† Gen. ch. viii. ver. 21. ch. ix. ver. 14, 15.

‡ The Hebrew nation was holy in reſpect of the ſeparation of the people to God's ſervice; not for their ſanctity. See Pearſon on the Creed, Communion of Saints.

even

even among thoſe who "were numbered "with them, and had obtained part of their "miniſtry," one who denied, and another who betrayed his Maſter. After Chriſt's departure, among the rulers, whoſe general ſervice was faithful, there was blameable conduct *, and difference of opinion. Among "the multitude, who believed with one ſoul," were thoſe "whoſe heart Satan had filled†." The Churches addreſſed by the Apoſtles erred, and had need of repentance ‡. The net, which was to "be caſt into the ſea," was intended indeed to "gather of every kind;" and in the field, which the kingdom of Heaven reſembled, "the wheat and the tares "were to grow up together unto the har-"veſt." It was ever in the conviction of Chriſt and of his Apoſtles, that many who took up the croſs ſhould, in a ſtate of trial and warfare, "fall away;" that "offences "muſt come," and hereſies ariſe, by which the evidences of truth ſhould be called up,

* Galat. ch. ii. ver. 11.

† Acts, ch. iv. ver. 32. ch. v. ver. 3.

‡ Revel. ch. ii and iii. Many of the firſt Chriſtians inclined to Judaical rules. Gal. ch. v. ver. 2. Some of the Church of Corinth denied the reſurrection, and profaned the Euchariſt.

and

and they that ſhould be approved would be made manifeſt.

Accordingly, the impartial voice of hiſtory proclaims, that as the converts multiplied, the profeſſion of the faith was corrupted; the character of the miniſtry debaſed; the diſcipline of manners ſubverted; and in ſucceeding times we look in vain for the external repreſentation of a true Church, any farther than as it was to be found in the ſucceſſion of a legitimate, though depraved miniſtry; in the preſervation of the lively oracles of truth; and in the profeſſion of the genuine faith, mingled with, and obſcured by the fictitious doctrines of human invention.

All therefore that the gracious aſſurances of our Lord, with reſpect to the protection and guidance of his Church, can be ſtated, in its ample extent to have promiſed, muſt be, that in the body, of which he was the myſtical head, ſhould continue to exiſt, through all ages, the union of a common fellowſhip, the unperiſhable permanency of the Divine Word, and the eſſential appointments and ordinances of a real Church.

This Church, in its viſible character, was to continue to exhibit the chequered ſhades of

of an earthly repreſentation, and to realize the deſcription of its unblemiſhed purity, only in the perfection of its final glory *. No ſanction then, was given by the ſacred promiſes to the pretences of an infallible and unchanging profeſſion of the faith, nor to the arrogant conceit of thoſe who, rejecting the oſtenſible inſtitutions, conſider the Church as compoſed only of members inviſibly united, and predeſtinated by partial election to the ſpiritual kingdom.

As the confined limits of a local eſtabliſhment were thrown down, this Church was no longer to be reſtricted to any favoured and peculiar people†, or to be organized in accommodation to any politic form of temporal government. Separate congregations, exiſting in diſtinct character, or combined in voluntary conjunction, were to compoſe connected parts of an univerſal diſpenſation; not conſtrained in ſubjection to any partial aſcendancy, but each regulated by its own laws, in dependency on general principles, and in

* This idea of the Church was received at the commencement of the Reformation, as agreeable to its ſtate in this life, ubi habet malos bonis ſimul admixtos. See a definition of the Church, corrected by Henry VIII. in Burnet's Addenda.

† Coloſſ. ch. iii. ver. 11.

the coherence of mutual attachment; and all enlightened by rays, diverging from that "Sun "of Righteouſneſs," which can alone conſtitute the centre of a Church extended through heaven and earth. In the ſacred writings, and not in traditionary doctrine, or in the precarious profeſſion of a varying faith, was to be preſerved "the form of doctrine and ſound words "which was firſt delivered to the Saints;" ſince "all nations were to be baptized into "that one houſhold of God," which was "built upon the foundation of the Apoſtles "and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the "chief corner-ſtone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an "holy Temple in the Lord *."

In the preſervation of theſe unerring and ſufficient oracles of truth, the accompliſhment of a ſignal part of the Divine promiſe, as to the ſuperintendence of the Church, may be maintained; ſince it was ſurely no inconſiderable demonſtration of an eſpecial Providence, that an holy law; denouncing through every page inſpired cenſures againſt exiſting doctrines and manners, ſhould, though withdrawn from general attention, be pre-

* Epheſ. ch. ii. ver. 20, 21.

ſerved

ſerved with unabated fidelity, by thoſe, whoſe flagrant departure from its inſtructions it expoſed, and whoſe downfall it predicted; and be tranſmitted with integrity, and the unanimous conſent of all Churches, till it rouſed the diſpoſition to reform. It was no trivial evidence of Chriſt's care, that the records of revelation ſhould be ſecure from injury, in languages little known but to thoſe whom every line rebuked with keeneſt reproach; through ages of darkneſs favourable to baſe deſign, and in which ſuperſtition might have united every intereſt in confederate meaſures, had not ambitious diſſenſion eſtabliſhed the vigilance of mutual hoſtility *.

The Confeſſion of Faith, contained in theſe writings, is the rock on which Chriſt has built his indefectible Church. Of its ſincere profeſſors, linked in inviſible fellowſhip, and characteriſed by the obſervance of eſſential ordinances, no age, it is preſumed, has been deſtitute; nor ſhall the gates of hell at any time

* It is a palpable and pregnant demonſtration of the truth of Chriſtianity, as well as of God's providential care of his Church, that the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament have been conſtantly preſerved with unſuſpected integrity by the Jews, who reject the Goſpel; and the inſtructions of the New Teſtament ſecured to us by thoſe corrupt Churches which were moſt intereſted to ſuppreſs them.

prevail againſt ſuch Catholic Church *; ſo as to deſtroy its exiſtence by external oppreſſion, or to undermine its foundations by internal hereſy. By the infallible teſt and criterion of inſpired wiſdom are the pretenſions of every earthly repreſentation of ſuch communion of the ſaints to be tried and examined †; and, in proportion as its decrees are reverenced, will the genuine character and excellency of the Church be diſplayed, and the coming of the heavenly kingdom be advanced.

We, who believe the divine declarations and promiſes to intimate ‡ and aſſure § the perpetuated ſucceſſion of a miniſtry with regu-

* Whitby conceives our Saviour's promiſe in Matt. ch. xvi. v. 18, to imply, that even death itſelf ſhould not prevail againſt the genuine members of Chriſt's Church, or that they ſhall enjoy a happy reſurrection. But our Lord is generally underſtood to have deſigned to ſignify, that the Church, which ſhould be built on St. Peter's preaching, ſhould never be deſtroyed on earth by external or inteſtine injury. A promiſe which imported, not an exemption from error, but a ſecurity from deſtruction by the aſcendancy of the powers of darkneſs. Ἅδης means Death. The gates of hell, being an Hebraical expreſſion, mean Hell or Death.

† Concil. Carthag. Act. tom. i. p. 1189.

‡ The ſervants mentioned in Matthew, ch. xiii. v. 27, who propoſed to gather up the tares; and the ſtewards, who are deſcribed as the rulers of the Lord's houſehold, to remain till his coming in, Matt. ch. xxiv. ver. 45, 46; muſt by analogy be conſidered as the miniſters of Chriſt's Church. See Potter's Church Govern. ch. iv.

§ Matt. ch. xxviii. v. 20.

lar

lar appointment and tranſmitted claims, have certainly ſufficient ground to maintain their completion in the unbroken continuance of the ſacred orders. Still indeed we muſt admit, the gradual degeneracy of thoſe orders into blind and deceitful guides; ſo far only directed by the influence of Chriſt and the Holy Spirit, as rendered ſubſervient to preſerve the fundamental doctrines of religion, mingled in external profeſſion with the groſſeſt errors; and to ſupport and tranſmit the rights of the ſpiritual authority. The oſtenſible pillars, and the viſible repreſentatives of the Chriſtian miniſtry, they doubtleſs were: and, as members of the ſacred lineage, tranſferred to their followers the privileges and functions of their appointed office.

Such immortal ſucceſſion in the inſtitution of the prieſthood, for "the work of the miniſtry," for "the edifying of the body of Chriſt," till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man; appears to have been a proviſion eſſential to the character, and contrived for the order and peace of the Chriſtian Church; precluding diſtractions; and diſcountenancing ſelf-ap-

* See Manning's England's Converſion and Reformation compared.

pointments *, pregnant with error and diſorders †. The degeneracy of thoſe who have tranſmitted a derived power, can furniſh no ſufficient objection to the validity of its communications; nor was the effect of Chriſt's ordinance done away by their wickedneſs, except as the doctrines of revelation were perverted in accommodation to corrupt manners ‡.

The preſervation of the miniſtry, imparted in the divine promiſe, implied no infallible

* Χωρις τουτων εκκλησια εκκλεκτη ουκ εστιν, ε συνδρομα αγιων, ε συναγωγη υσιων, Ignat. adv. Trall. Eccleſia non eſt quæ non habet ſacerdotem. Hieron. cum Lucifer, c. 8.

† Biſhop Hoadley, in an argument which affects the juſt pretenſions of our Church, aſſerts, that there is the greateſt appearance, and, humanly ſpeaking, a certainty againſt the regular and uninterrupted ſucceſſion of biſhops; in proof of which aſſertion, he appeals to the opinion of thoſe who maintain all lay baptiſms, and all offices performed by perſons who either have been irregularly ordained, or have forged their pretenſions to ordination to be mere nullities. How the opinion of ſuch perſons affects the argument, it is not eaſy to diſcover. Lay baptiſms have no direct relation to the ſubject; and whatever might the nullity of the offices performed by perſons irregularly or ſurreptitiouſly ordained, there is no ground to maintain that there ever was a period deſtitute of a legitimate miniſtry, or even that ſuch perſons ever attained to the epiſcopal order; and therefore it does not appear upon what hiſtorical evidence the aſſertion can be ſupported, except it be that of the nag's head ordination. The Romaniſts admit the validity of our ordination to the Reformation, as derived by St. Auſtin from St. Gregory. See F. Courayer on the Validity of Engliſh Ordinat. Burnet's Reformation Vindicat. and Lindſay's Vindication of the Church of England.

‡ 26 Article.

guidance,

guidance, any further, than as its members ſhould attend to that written word which was left for their direction; nor could it be deemed requiſite that the influence of the Spirit, however eſpecially to be imparted to the miniſtry, ſhould ſuperſede the appointed oracles of inſtruction, or diſpenſe with ſincerity of intention and integrity of obedience: and when, therefore, from the ſeduction of unworthy motives, the paſtors who tranſgreſſed, deſerted "the fountain of living waters*," and obeyed the voice of that antichriſtian power, "whoſe coming was after the working of "Satan, with all deceivableneſs of un-"righteouſneſs in them that periſh †;" they forfeited

* Jerem. ch. ii. v. 8. 13.

† 2 Theſſal. ch. ii. v. 9, 10. The diſciples of Chriſt had been fully cautioned againſt that Man of Sin who was to appear. The Fathers, who lived before the deſtruction of the Roman empire, expected Antichriſt to riſe on the ruins of that dominion. See Tertul. Apol. c. 22. et ad Scap. c. 1. Hier. ad Algos. Chryſoſt. et Ambroſ. in 2 Theſſal. c. 2. Origen in Matt. Tract 27. Many of the earlier reformers conſidered the Roman Pontiff as Antichriſt. See Jewell's View of Seditious Bull, and on 2 Theſſal. ch. ii. v. 47; and Paule's Life of Whitgift. Thoſe who object to this application upon the notion of its being inconſiſtent with the idea that the Church of Rome is a true Church, do not ſeem to have adverted ſufficiently to 2 Theſſ. ch. ii. ver. 4. where the Son of Perdition is deſcribed as "ſitting in the Temple of God;" by which St. Chryſoſtom, Theodoret, and others, underſtand the Chriſtian Church. See Chryſoſt. in Loc. tom. iii. Theod. in Epiſt. Div Decret. Auguſt.

forfeited their pretenſions to the divine direction, by departing from the eſtabliſhed ſources of illumination and grace.

The preciſe character and the ſpecific effect of the ſpirit, the moments of its impulſe, and the limits of its aſpiration, "no man "knoweth." That it bloweth, however, by appointed courſes, and through hallowed ways, and that it breathes its ſilent influence under the mild inſtruction of the inſpired writings, perfected as the ſacred depoſitory of divine wiſdom, for perpetual guidance of the Church, will admit of no controverſy. When therefore, forſaking as it were the Shecinah of God's preſence, the infatuated rulers of the Church turned to the idols of their own creation; and with arbitrary aſſumption of infallibility, and preſumptuous boaſts of a divine impulſe, aſſembled their proſtitute and ambitious councils; and ſet up precarious traditions and decrees, while they violated the laws of acknowledged revelation; they but blaſphemed the authority of Chriſt's name, who, as his in-

guſt. de Civit. Dei, l. ii. c. 19. The antichriſtian characters were very early diſplayed; and the extravagant adulation of Ennodius maintained in the ſixth century, that the Roman Pontiff was conſtituted judge in the place of God. See Moſheim, Cent. VI. p. ii. ch. 2.

ſtructions

ſtructions were diſregarded, left them to the wanderings of their own vanity.

To thoſe who, amidſt prevailing deluſions, were ſolicitous to diſcern the veſtiges of the true faith, it was conſolation to reflect, that, the Sacred Writings were diſperſed in languages ſo different, and among nations ſo ſeparated and adverſe to each other, that no change of doctrine could paſs undetected; that the very ſects and hereſies which ſcandalized the faith, prevented the mutilation of its records; and that when the volume of its doctrines ſhould be again unfolded to general regard, its authority muſt be reſpected; that the external form of the Church, with primitive appointments and fundamental doctrines, ſtill remained, and that where two or three were in ſincerity gathered together in Chriſt's name, he was in the midſt of them *.

By the interpretation of the Scriptures into the languages of different nations, the propagation of the Goſpel was accelerated at its firſt preaching through the moſt diſtant regions †. As the imparted bleſſing was withdrawn

* Origen, Com. in Matt. tom. xii. 1510.

† The Syriac, Egyptian, and Æthiopic verſions, were made at very early periods of the Church; and contributed, as well as

drawn and hidden from mankind, groſs darkneſs overſhadowed the people*, and was diſperſed only when the beams of revelation again burſt forth. It was by the providential reſtoration of the Scriptures, which took place at the revival of literature, that the corruptions of the Romiſh Church were firſt ſucceſsfully expoſed, and the Reformation happily commenced. Where this pillar of permanent direction led the way, though it might be "cloud and darkneſs" to thoſe who were hardened againſt God's inſtructions, "it gave light" to all who followed the divine ſtandard. To the excluſive infallibility aſcribed to the Holy Writings by the advocates of truth, muſt be attributed the renovation of thoſe principles which had been read in the ſimplicity of the primitive faith. Awakened to a peruſal of the ſacred pages, the "captive daughter" of the Church "ſhook "herſelf from the duſt, and looſed herſelf "from the bands of her neck †." The diſ-

as the Latin tranſlation from which they were made, to facilitate the advancement of religion. Origen was particularly induſtrious in circulating copies.

* The Scriptures were read in the vulgar tongue in the Weſtern Church, till the ſixth or the ſeventh century, when the Latin language ceaſed to be ſpoken as the vulgar tongue at Rome. See Uſher's Collect. by Wharton.

† Iſaiah, ch. lii. v. 1, 2.

perſed

perſed and dejected members of the faith, reanimated by the ſpirit of the Lord, were raiſed up, as it were, by a reſurrection, and reaſſembled to compoſe the living repreſentation of Chriſt's body *.

No where, was the reſtored volume more joyfully unfolded, or more eagerly peruſed, than in this country. The friends of religion anxiouſly promoted its acceptance. The adherents to error obſtinately endeavoured to ſuppreſs, or inſidiouſly laboured to corrupt, its evidence †. The efforts of integrity, however, happily prevailed; and under the influence of Chriſt's preſence, experienced in the animation of his oracles and words, the leaders of reform proceeded to reſcue the inſtitutions and doctrines of the Church from the deformities which had "changed their glory "for that which did not profit ‡." Convinced that the Church of Rome, like preceding Churches, had erred; as in living and ceremonies, "ſo in matters of faith," they

* Ezek. ch. xxxvii.

† See the Account of the inſidious plan of Gardiner to obſcure the tranſlation of the Scriptures, by retaining Latin words. Burnet, vol. i. fol. 315.

‡ Our Church retained every catholic doctrine; every doctrine which had been univerſally received; rejecting local traditions and adventitious errors.

determined

determined to liſten only to the Scriptures *, as to " celeſtial voices," as " to the power of " God, againſt which neither law or cuſtom " ſhould be heard †."

Abiding by the ſacred liſt of " thoſe books " of whoſe authority was never any doubt" in the univerſal Church, and which had uniformly been conſidered as " the perfection of " uncorruptneſs," as being dictated by the word of God and his Spirit, they conſidered tradition as changeable and uncertain, and determined wholly to reſt on the Sacred Writings in ſubjects of faith, as the foundation and final reſort of all their perſuaſions. Even thoſe venerable works which had been received as canonical in an inferior ſenſe, by writers ‡ and councils of the early ages; but which, as not included in the Hebrew canon, or in the undiſputed catalogues acknowledged by the Church, had no claim to be regarded as inſpired and infallible; they retained but for example of life and inſtruction of manners §.

In the interpretation of the Scriptures, it was reaſonable, that primitive conſtruction and

* 19 Article.
† Jewell. Apol.
‡ Ignat. Ep. ad Philad. Irenæ, l. ii. c. 47.
§ Coſin's Scholaſt. Hiſt.

early

early explications ſhould be regarded. Hence as commentators, on their genuine wiſdom, the councils of the uncorrupted times were revered. Hence, as enlightened interpreters of the revealed Word, the learned men and fathers of the Church were duly eſteemed; and while they were diſparaged by the Romiſh Church, with conſcious apprehenſion of the teſtimony which they furniſhed, our reformers conſidered them "as inſtruments of the "mercy of God, and veſſels full of grace *." "They deſpiſed them not; they reverenced "them, and gave thanks unto God for them, "as witneſſes of the truth, as worthy pillars "and ornaments in the Church of God. Yet "did they not build upon them, nor make "them the foundation and warrant of their "conſcience; they did not put their truſt in "them, their truſt was in the name of the "Lord †."

Thoſe on the continent, who had "blown "the firſt trumpet, and ſet up the ſign" of reformation, the reſtorers of our Church regarded as great and illuſtrious men; admired their bold and awakened ſpirit; their zeal for

* Taylor's Diſſuaſive from Popery.

† See a Treatiſe on the Scriptures, compoſed from Jewell's Sermons, publiſhed in 1570. Alſo Jewell's Apol. and his Sermon on 1 Peter, ch. iv. ver. 11, and the Writings of the Reformers paſſim.

truth;

truth; reſpected their many eminent virtues; gloried in the animation of their common cauſe. They did not however enliſt under their banners, or aſſume their titles. Every leader but Chriſt, with the excluſive veneration of the primitive faith *, they diſclaimed; liſtening to thoſe who preceded them in the glorious work, not as dictators of their creed, but as monitors and guides; aſſiſting them to "comprehend, with all ſaints, what was the "breadth and length and depth and height "and love of Chriſt †."

Adopting the juſt and liberal idea of a catholic union, reſulting from a common dependency on one inviſible Lord, the advocates for our national inſtitution conſidered, with charitable affection, every congregation reformed to fundamental principles. The

* The earlier Chriſtians anxiouſly avoided the diſtinctions of party titles. Chryſoſtom, Hom. xxxiii. in Act. Heretics firſt claſſed under leaders, Epiphan. Hæreſ. 42. Nazian. Orat. ad Epiſcop. Bingham's Chriſtian Antiq. ch. i. § 6. In the liberal comprehenſion of their character, the diſciples of Chriſt were ſtyled Catholics.

† Epheſ. ch. iii. ver. 18. Our reformers, while they rejected the intemperate and obtruded councils of Calvin, accepted the aſſiſtance of Bucer, Peter Martyr, and others. Du Pin, whoſe works are too voluminous to be accurate, however candidly he might deſign to be ſo, aſſerts what is much too ſtrong, when he ſays, "C'eſt à Bucer et à Fagius qu'il faût im-"puter le changement de religion en Angleterre et en Ecoſſe." Vide Biblioth. des Auteurs Heretiques du 16 & 17 Siecle.

Church,

Church, it was perceived, which had ſpread its multitudes to the uttermoſt parts of the earth, though diſtinguiſhed in different diſtributions under different names, might preſerve, as doth the ocean that rolleth in divers diviſions, its eſſential nature, its connected waves. Contending only for thoſe neceſſary doctrines and ordinances, upon which the Chriſtian faith ſhould reſt, they admitted that rites and ceremonies, and particulars of human appointment, might vary, in conſiſtency with the regulations of ſeparate ſocieties.

Every congregation, exiſting in the fellowſhip of religious union, muſt define the terms of its aſſociation, and deſcribe the tenets of its faith. The variety of conſtructions admitted in partial and fanciful interpretations of Scripture, induces the neceſſity of poſitive explications; which may concentrate opinions in ſome ſpecific points; which may refute falſe imputations; determine wavering ſentiment, and ſecure conſiſtency of inſtruction. The doctrines of our Church, which were drawn out into expreſs expoſition with deſign to fix that uncertainty of the faith which the rejection of the papal authority was repreſented to have occaſioned, were ſuch only as, after comprehenſive examination, were approved.

approved. They were ſlowly ratified, and cautiouſly expreſſed. The ancient Creeds which were adopted, and the articles and formularies of faith which were compoſed, were commended to acceptance only as preſumed to be faithfully expreſſive of revealed inſtruction; ſince nothing was deemed neceſſary to ſalvation which was not either read in Scripture, or might not be proved thereby *. They were framed with clear and explicit declaration in eſſential points, though with much latitude of expreſſion in doubtful and controverted queſtions. Thus judiciouſly conſtructed, they have contributed moſt effectually to aſſiſt the enquiries, and unite the opinions, of the members of our Church in the chief principles of faith; at the ſame time that they draw not a line of proſcription on thoſe ſubjects, which for ages have been diſcuſſed without ſatisfactory ſolution or perfect agreement.

Our Church, which came out and withdrew itſelf from the innovations and aſſumptions of a corrupt dominion, had no deſign to eſtabliſh its union, on any principle that might ſanction future uſurpations. It ad-

* Sixth Article.

mitted

mitted that a ſeceſſion did not imply a ſchiſm, and that a removal from external communion did not neceſſarily import a deſertion of Catholic fellowſhip. Its advocates contended, however, that a ſeparation for trivial cauſes, or ſlight objections, was a preſumptive departure from the faith, and a poſitive breach of that harmony, which is the band of union; that the individual rejection of public deciſions, where no doctrines affecting the ſubſtance of the faith were concerned, argued a proud and intolerant ſpirit, which would preſumptuouſly erect its own opinion as the ſtandard of direction. They did not think that any declarations, or preciſe expoſitions, could control the human underſtanding, which had exerted itſelf with energy, and burſt even the complicated chains with which it had been fettered by the tyranny of the Roman See. They hoped, however, for acquieſcence with their determinations, ſo far as they ſhould be found conſonant to the authority now univerſally eſtabliſhed.

The ſubſcription to its articles, required from thoſe who undertake to preach the doctrines of the Church, and are received into the boſom of its confidence and favour, im-

plies no arbitrary impoſition of its decrees; ſince the adoption of the ſpiritual office is voluntary and unconſtrained; and the diſtribution of truſt and advantages muſt be regulated with conſideration of the connection between ſpeculative principles and practical inſtitutions. If the intended uniformity require the acceptance of preciſe articles in their known and ordinary ſenſe; it does not preclude a freedom of interpretation, where the original intention, or the preciſe import, is ambiguous and undefined. The aſſent, likewiſe, required from thoſe who are admitted to profit by endowments connected with the eſtabliſhment, is uſually vindicated upon principles of ſimilar conſideration, though leſs immediate force *.

The power, which the Church claims, of appointing the rites and ceremonial of exterior obſervance, is the inherent right of every religious ſociety, to provide for its own regimen, in particulars of varying and unpreſcribed character; a right of ſubjecting the

* The requiſition of aſſent to the Articles at matriculation and admiſſion to degrees at the Univerſities of Oxford and Cambridge, ſeems to be deſigned to ſecure the integrity of religious principles in thoſe whoſe education is to be provided for, and many of whom are to become miniſters of the eſtabliſhed Church.

fancies and extravagancies of individuals to the decorum of public regulation, that "all "things may be done in order," and without contemptuous tranſgreſſion of lawful direction; its proclaimed authority in matters of faith*, is not that of controlling the independency of private judgment, or of ſetting up dominion over the mind by any arbitrary decrees; but a declaration of the pre-eminence of the deliberate and collective deciſion of duly-conſtituted teachers, entitled to deference, and beſt qualified, in doubtful queſtions, to ſettle and terminate offenſive controverſy †.

To vindicate the rights of ſuch authority,

* The firſt clauſe of the 20th article, which aſſerts that the Church has power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controverſies of the faith, though ſtated by Heylin to have been extant in the Regiſter of Convocation, and ſo referred to by Laud; and ſaid to have been printed both in Latin and Engliſh in 1562; and according to Strype, in two copies which appeared in 1563; was omitted by the intereſt of the Puritans in 1571 and 1612, and its authenticity impeached; the principle was admitted by the earlier Reformers, and the clauſe was ratified by Parliament in 1662. See Heylin's Hiſt. of the Preſbyterians, l. vi. p. 268; Vernon's Life of Heylin, and Neal, Vol. I. ch. iv. It is curious, that in the Aſſembly's Confeſſion, ch. xxxi. art. 3. it is aſſerted, that it belongeth to ſynods miniſterially to determine controverſies of faith and caſes of conſcience. Hence were the words of Iſaiah, "Look "unto the rock from whence ye are hewn," &c. well applied tothe Diſſenters, who objected to the clauſe in the 20th article.

† See Preface concerning ceremonies, in Prayer-Book.

is not to diſpoſſeſs revelation of its paramount ſupremacy, or to deject reaſon from its ſeat. To the former, our Church aſcribes the ſovereignty of unerring decrees; to the latter, it appeals as authoriſed to judge, but under principles of reverence for the credible witneſſes of truth, and under obligations to weigh with impartial ſpirit, the depoſitions of general wiſdom againſt the ſuggeſtions of particular fancy. It challenges to its aſſembled miniſtry the ability to expound the doctrines of revelation, with fairer pretenſions to exactneſs, than can be alledged by thoſe, who with ordinary application and ſingle judgment, ſpeculate in private interpretation with private prejudice. Preſumptuous muſt be the individual who with confident vanity contemns the guidance of the collective ſentiment; the comprehenſive reſearch of rightly appointed and regularly educated guides; who ſpurns the deciſion of a Church emancipated from prejudice, and modelled by men of unprecedented talents, in conformity to that ſacred plan, which, under every impreſſion favourable to truth, they ſtudied. To ſome authority he muſt at laſt ſubſcribe; and depend on the fidelity of thoſe who diſentangle what is difficult, and elucidate what is obſcure;

who

who interpret the niceties of the original languages, and deduce the particulars of remote connection and external illuſtration and teſtimony.

That authority hath every claim to regard, and may reaſonably be allowed to determine in doubtful points, which, in its legitimate office and power, decided in the conſiſtency of the common voice. The reſtorers of the faith, which we profeſs, required no blind ſubmiſſion as inſpired teachers; but whatever of general guidance might be preſumed to direct the enquiries of a devout ſpirit, was vindicated with ſtrong pretenſions by thoſe, who, by careful ſtudy and proficiency in requiſite attainments, were qualified for the ſearch of truth; and whatever of eſpecial and permanent direction was enſured by Chriſt's promiſes to the appointed leaders of his people, might be claimed with juſtifiable and peculiar confidence by the lawful miniſters and interpreters of his inſtruction *, who had engaged with diſintereſted zeal in the reſtoration of true religion.

Thoſe who have rejected all ſuch authority

* Clavis eſt Expoſitio Legis. Tertull. cont. Marcian. lib. iv. Chryſoſt. Hæreſ. 44. Hieron. in Eſaia, l. vi. c. 14.

have fluctuated with endleſs heſitation and uncertainty, as the wantonneſs of their fancy hath varied; or have yielded themſelves to the pretences of infallibility and the deluſions of inſpiration; have ſeparated from communion with a true Church, but to be "carried about "with every wind of doctrine, by the ſleight "of men and cunning craftineſs, whereby "they lie in wait to deceive."

If the varieties of conſtruction, received by different Churches as well as by individuals, be alledged to prove the exiſtence of frequent error in the collective deciſion, and to invalidate the preſumption of Divine guidance in the aggregate council; it ſhould be remembered, that, ſince the reſtoration of the excluſive authority of the ſacred writings, theſe varieties have prevailed chiefly in queſtions of ambiguous character and indiſtinct revelation: that the great and fundamental doctrines of Chriſtianity have been maintained by almoſt every public repreſentation of the Catholic Church; while hereſies and enormous errors have riſen with individuals, and deluded the vanity of ſubdiviſions and ſects. The Papal decrees, were framed with affectation of ſuperiority to, or total diſregard of, Scripture. Councils, have erred by liſtening to

to the reports of tradition*; but the Churches, reformed on the baſis of Scripture, have accorded in moſt of the fundamental points of faith; and approximated to each other, in proportion as they have diſclaimed the dictates of private authority. It is the luſt of ſolitary pride which engenders ſpeculations injurious to the faith; which conſecrates its own fancies, and erects its independent and deluſive light. By the operation and influence of private vanity, opinions riſe into doctrines, doctrines ſwell into diſtinctions, and diſtinctions increaſe into ſects; extending and multiplying into endleſs circles, deſtructive of the peace and harmony of ſociety. True wiſdom, neither confident in its own opinions, nor contemptuous of thoſe of others, corrects

* Eraſmus Ιχθυοφαγια. That the Scriptures were alone ſufficient to ſalvation, was an heretical opinion before the Reformation. See Fox's Martyrs, art. Lambert. Mr. Eyre, in his late Letter to Mr. Churton, ſpeaking of the Scriptures, aſſerts, that "to ſuppoſe that a dead letter, a dumb writing, often obſcure, can be the means which God has pleaſed to make uſe of to teach mankind what they are to believe and practiſe, is to ſuppoſe an impoſſibility," &c. &c. And this profane declamation, from apparently a ſincere and pious writer, is to prove the neceſſity of a conſtant ſubſiſting tribunal; without which undefined tribunal he repreſents the Scriptures; though he allows them to have proceeded from the Holy Ghoſt, to "be an apple of diſcord, a ſenſeleſs ſyſtem." p. 15—19.

the bias of perſonal prejudice; the influence of habit, of intereſt, and of paſſion; is ſtudious, when the judgment is advanced to maturity, to reform the errors of early adoption, and to reſpect the deciſions which have long been reverenced.

That entire agreement of opinion, which can reſult only from perfect knowledge, it were fruitleſs on earth to expect. Difference, in ſubordinate particulars, is not incompatible with ſoundneſs of doctrine and integrity of faith. The veſture of religion, it has been obſerved, may ſtill exhibit its variegated colours, if, like that of Chriſt, having no ſeam, it be not rent. The Church, which is to admit all nations and people of the earth, muſt continue to receive its members, diſtinguiſhed by the diverſities of human character. Convinced, however, that when hereafter it ſhall be prepared with undefiled purity *, it ſhall be a glorious Church without blemiſh, it is our preſent concern to labour for the ad-

* Cyprian de Unitate, Bacon de Unitat. Alia ſunt in quibus inter ſe aliquando etiam doctiſſimi atque optimi regulæ Catholicæ doctores ſalvâ fidei compage non conſonant. Auguſt. C. Jul. 1, 2. p. 8.

† Canticle, vi. ver. 9. Rev. ch. xxi. ver. 2.

vancement

vancement of its perfection. As we conſpire in ſincerity of intention, ſo do we approach in correſpondence of opinion; as we conform to the practical inſtructions of religion, ſo ſhall we coaleſce in the acceptance of its ſpeculative doctrines.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

2 TIM. iii. 16.

All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God; and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in Righteouſneſs.

THE great and important principle of the ſufficient and excluſive authority of the Scriptures, to be reſpected as the unerring guide in all matters of faith and religious inſtruction, was the leading ſtar which conducted our Reformers to the diſcovery and acknowledgment of truth; as indeed the glory of revelation, which had ſhone around thoſe who abode in darkneſs on the Continent, had rouſed their attention to the voice which proclaimed the Saviour who was "to "guide their feet into the way of peace *."

* See Matt. ch. ii. Luke, ch. i. ver. 79. ch. ii.

A diſregard

A diſregard to revealed wiſdom, it was perceived, and a ſubſtitution of human for Divine authority, had been in every age the cauſe of error. The exiſting evils could never have been ſo ſucceſsfully maintained, had not the ſacred Volume been withheld from the general claſſes of ſociety; and the removal of them could not be completely effected but by its reſtoration to general notice.

To the people who had been ſeduced by the abominations of idolatry, or miſled by the ſuggeſtions of earthly councils, to whom "religion had become a reproach;" the prophets of ancient times had "ſpread out their "hands," and exclaimed, "Stand ye in the "ways, and ſee and aſk for the old paths, "where is the good way, and walk therein, "and ye ſhall find reſt*." To the miſguided and deluded Jews, who cavilled at the teſtimonies of the Goſpel, our Saviour commanded that they ſhould "ſearch the "Scriptures;" for in them they thought they had eternal life, and from ignorance of which they had often erred †. To the ſame permanent and undeviating rule did the primitive Chriſtians refer on every difficulty, as to

* Iſaiah, ch. lxv. ver. 2, 3.
† Matt. ch. xxii. ver. 29.

indiſputable

indiſputable, and the only ſure authority by which, "whatever was concealed under the "ſhade and cloud of error, might be opened "to the light of truth*." Similar were the exhortations of thoſe who ſought to bring back the preſence of undefiled religion to our country. Poſſeſſing themſelves at once of that firm and tenable ground, "other foun-"dation than which no man could lay;" they determined on it, as on the eſtabliſhed rock, to reſtore the Church, which was to exhibit, with renovated character, the integrity of the Chriſtian faith †.

The tranſlation of the Scriptures into the language of this country, had opened the firſt glimmerings of the reſtoration of true religion ‡; and though we refer the æra of the commencement

* Cyprian. Epiſt. 74. Chryſoſt. Hom. 49. in Oper. imperfect. Theophilus, &c.

† See the eloquent Treatiſe on the Scriptures, compoſed from Jewell's Sermons, among his works.

‡ Wickliffe effected a tranſlation of all the Scriptures. It was made from the Vulgate; which Coverdale pronounced to be ſo greatly corrupt, as he thought none other tranſlations were. See Epiſ. dedicated to Henry VIII. Some parts of Scripture had been before tranſlated; but the Anglo-Saxonic verſions were become not only unintelligible as to the words and ſpelling, but illegible as to the letter and character, to the people, and even to many of the learned. See Caxton's Life, and Lewis's Diſſert. prefixed to his Hiſtory of Tranſlations. In the reign of Henry VI. Reginald Peacock, Biſhop of Chicheſter, who

commencement of the Reformation to the reign of Henry, we ſhould not overlook the previous circumſtances which had prepared the way for its advancement. The indications of approaching truth had long been hailed, and the impatience of the enlightened part of mankind brooked with indignation its delay. The doctrines and pretenſions of the Papal power had often been aſſailed, deep as was its foundation, and confirmed as were its extended intereſts *.

The firſt verſions which appeared, though very defective, excited a ſpirit which thoſe, who were intereſted to ſupport corruption, vainly laboured to diſcourage; and the opinions which they inſpired ſo "mightily grew "and flouriſhed," eſpecially among thoſe

who had been employed many years in tranſlating the Scriptures, was convicted of hereſy. It was cuſtomary to faſten bits of Scripture about the necks of the Lollards, who were condemned to the flames. An abbot, who was uncle of archbiſhop Wickliffe, is related to have ſaid, that he was ſure the Romiſh religion could not continue long, for he had read the Scriptures over and over, and could never find therein that it was founded by God. Strype and Paule's Life of Whitgift.

* The Papal authority was obliged to moderate its decrees, even in the thirteenth century, againſt Biſhop Groſthead, whom Matthew Paris calls Romanorum Malleus et Contemptor; for fear of alienating the Engliſh nation. See Collyer, Vol. I. Newton on the Prophecies, Vol. III. p. 181—186.

who

who had been animated by the revival of literature, that, even during the life of the earlieſt tranſlators of the ſacred Volume, half the nation was repreſented, in the language of intereſted complaint, to have bowed to their influence; extending, in defiance of the odious and unchriſtian ſeverity, with which they were oppoſed *.

The evidence of truth brightened in proportion as it was diſcuſſed; and to the conviction which it excited, rather than to the

* The Monkiſh writers ſtate, with exaggerated lamentation, that half the kingdom had been led, even in the time of Wickliffe, to embrace his doctrines. The Londoners appear to have been ſtrongly affected to them, in the reign of Richard the Second. In the time of Henry the Fifth they had ſpread ſo much, that though a thouſand marks were offered for the apprehenſion of Lord Cobham, a diſtinguiſhed aſſertor of Wickliffe's opinions, who had been condemned for hereſy, and a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town which ſhould ſecure him, he remained concealed in Wales four years. Chaucer, who ſatyrized the vices of the Clergy, and who is repreſented by Fox to have brought many to the knowledge of true religion; and Eraſmus, who had lighted the way to the threſhold of the Reformation, conſiderably advanced the cauſe. The conduct of the Clergy had rendered them ſo obnoxious in the reign of Henry the Eighth, that, in the affair of Horſey, who was accuſed of having aſſiſted in the murder of Richard Hunne; Fitzjames, Biſhop of London, made intereſt with the King that the matter might be examined in council; and if the accuſed ſhould be found innocent, the Attorney-General might be inſtructed to allow the indictment falſe; alledging, that the people of London did ſo favour hereſy, that they would condemn any Clerk, though innocent as Abel. See Holinſhed's Chron. A. 1382. Fox, Burnet, &c.

unbridled

unbridled paſſions of a diſſolute ſovereign, are we to look for the firſt cauſe of the Reformation in this country.

The ſentiment which had ſwelled with great and increaſing energy, waited but the favourable occaſion to diſplay its vigour. Henry would probably have ſooner burſt his bonds aſunder, if he had not been withheld by conſiderations of conſiſtency in that cauſe, which he had been prompted in the pride of controverſy to defend *. That at laſt he was urged to break the ties which enchained the ſpirit of Reform, by the irritation and obſtacles which his paſſions encountered, is indeed unqueſtionable; and in this, and in many other inſtances, it would be intereſting to conſider, were it within the ſcope of our deſign, how remarkably thoſe paſſions were rendered inſtrumental to the furtherance of

* Henry, before the agitation of his divorce, had ſeen the neceſſity of a reform in the Church, and inſtructed his Commiſſioners, at the Council of Lateran, to conclude every thing for the good of the Catholic Church, and for a reformation of the head, and of its members. In a bull which Wolſey had obtained from Rome, the manners and ignorance of the Clergy were ſtrongly ſtigmatized; they were ſaid to be "given over "to a reprobate mind." Even Sir Thomas More had, with open and covert reflection, accuſed them in his Utopia of corruption of doctrine, in accommodation to the corruption of their lives.

the

the Divine purpoſe *; and by what inducements he, who had been the applauded champion of popery, was led to be the firſt who ſhould "go up upon her walls, and de- "ſtroy; but not make a full end: and ſhould "take away her battlements, which were "not the Lord's †."

The hiſtorians, who detail the progreſs of the Reformation, in its gradual advancement to perfection, while they develope the various paſſions which engaged in the furtherance of the grand deſign; and the fluctuating changes which were rendered, by the control of Providence, ſubſervient to one uniform and conſiſtent ſcheme; unfold to our admiration many ſcenes of ſtriking and important cha-

* Verſiſque ad divinorum operum executionem humanis adfectibus. Turret. Hiſt. Eccleſ. Sæc. 16. § 5. Wolſey, even before the King's headſtrong paſſions had been totally unreined, uttered a little before his death a very ſingular encomium upon Henry. "He is a prince," ſays the degraded favourite, "of moſt royal carriage, and hath a princely heart; "and rather than he will miſs for any part of his will, he will "endanger the one half of his kingdom. I do aſſure you, "that I have often kneeled before him, ſometimes three hours "together, to perſuade him from his will and appetite, but "could not prevail." See Fiddes's Life of Wolſey, p. 501.

† Jerem. ch. v. ver. 10. The exceſſes of the Papal uſurpation provoked their own reform. It is worth obſervation, that in England the immediate cauſe of the rejection of the ſupremacy was an application for a divorce; a concern in which the Popes had often interfered, with moſt capricious and unjuſtifiable cruelty.

racter; which it were foreign to our purpoſe to review, ſince we ſeek only, by deſcribing the principles, adopted and confirmed in the eſtabliſhment of the work, to point out the chief cauſes of the excellency of its character.

In the preſent continuation of our general plan, it is intended to ſhew that the principal cauſes which muſt be aſſigned for the advancement of the Reformation; and for the fidelity with which our Church is diſtinguiſhed in the expreſſion of its doctrine and faith; are, firſt, that revelation was reſpected and adhered to in all points in which the Scriptures were found to diſcloſe inſtruction; and ſecondly, that thoſe Scriptures were explained, not by the private interpretation, or arbitrary conſtruction of individuals, biaſſed by perſonal prejudice; but by collective explication; after general enquiry and deliberate diſcuſſion.

That the progreſs of the Reformation, in its advancement to perfection, muſt be attributed to the prevailing influence of truth, impoſing its irreſiſtible conviction, and inducing the neceſſity of change, in proportion as the Scriptures were unfolded: that religion did not always bend as the ſceptre inclined, or conform to the deſigns of political contrivance;

contrivance; but that it aſſerted its own rights, and vindicated its own ſanctity, by the influence of reaſon on the public mind, will appear from the moſt careleſs retroſpect; whatever invidious repreſentations may have been made to the contrary. Henry benefited the cauſe of truth chiefly by the ſteady countenance which he gave to the communication of the ſacred light; in other reſpects he promoted the Reformation, only where his paſſions impelled him to deſultory concurrence with its friends. Rejecting the ſupremacy of the Roman ſee, and ſpoiling the revenues of its inſtitutions, he receded from its faith with heſitation and reluctance; and the Reformers, who had at firſt been gratified with ſome declarations of ſincere doctrine*, with regret

* Henry has been injuriouſly repreſented to have relinquiſhed no doctrines of the Romiſh faith, except the ſupremacy. See Du Pin, Bibliotheque des Auteurs Heretiques, p. i. ch. 4, &c. But it ſhould be recollected, that the declaration of Convocation in 1536, which was corrected by the King, and the Inſtitution of a Chriſtian Man, approved by him in 1537, refuted many Popiſh opinions, and ſtated many points of faith in oppoſition to the Romiſh perſuaſions. Cranmer likewiſe obtained, in 1546, permiſſion to have prayers, proceſſions, and liturgies, in the vulgar tongue; and might have, perhaps, availed himſelf farther of Gardiner's abſence, on his embaſſy to the Emperor, had not the vigilant favourers of ſuperſtition written over to inform the King, that if he proceeded any farther, the emperor would break off all intercourſe with him; a threat

gret ſaw him afterwards ſeduced under the influence of the Romiſh party *; and obtained every farther conceſſion with difficulty.

The ſpeculative opinions of Henry wavered with the fluctuations of his temper: uncontrollable by the dictates of others, they changed with his ſuppoſed intereſts, or in conformity to the views of thoſe, who engaged his affections and flattered his vanity. Inflated with the idea of his own ſuperior wiſdom, he continued, however, at all times to be equally jealous of the orthodoxy of his faith; and, in the prerogative of an undefined ſupremacy, determined that the ſentiments of his ſubjects ſhould vary with his deciſions. In the infancy of opinions the public mind certainly yields in accommodation to every deciſion, more pliantly than when time has ſtrengthened, and controverſy confirmed its bias. The impreſſions which it had received in the days of Henry, in many important

which had much effect with Henry, who wiſhed to profit by the influence of the Emperor, to prevent any interference of the Council of Trent, in the affairs of England. See Burnet, &c.

* In the Neceſſary Erudition of the Chriſtian Man, publiſhed 1542, without conſent of Convocation, but afterwards confirmed by parliament, the ſeven ſacraments were re-eſtabliſhed, and ſome exceptionable principles, relating to tranſubſtantiation and maſſes, introduced.

points,

points, may be pronounced to have been ſtill recent and timid; mingled with doubts, and liſtening with deference to authority. The leaders of reform were, in ſome particulars, as yet, under the influence of long-eſtabliſhed notions; and where they were enlightened to diſcover truth, they were often unwilling to riſk the conceſſions which they had obtained, by any hazardous oppoſition to their ſovereign's opinions; which ſeem to have vibrated with alternate favour, between the ſupporters of the corrupt, and the advocates of the reformed faith.

They exerted themſelves principally in confirming his diſpoſition to allow the Scriptures to the people, who read them with anxious attention; and in promoting the general uſe and improvement of them; while thoſe who were intereſted in ancient ſuperſtitions, ſtrove with ſolicitude to withhold them, and not ſeldom prophanely to impeach their utility*. Hence, though the Reformers had

* Cranmer, in 1539, obtained permiſſion for private perſons to read the Scriptures in their own houſes. Bibles had been ſet up in the churches in 1536. Bonner, to gratify Henry, placed ſix of the great Bibles in St. Paul's church in 1541. They were read with inconceivable avidity by crowds who aſſembled around them. Parents had their children inſtructed in read-

had the mortification to ſee the principles of the Romiſh faith renewed, and confirmed by penalties of unprecedented rigour*; and the miſts of returning error overſpread the concluding years of the King†; yet were they ſatisfied that they had effectually ſowed the ſeeds which muſt ripen in more auſpicious times; and could only labour to mitigate, by ſubſequent qualification, the operation of thoſe

ing, purpoſely to carry them to St. Paul's, and hear them read the Scriptures. The excluſive authority of the inſpired writings was ſlowly vindicated. In Matthew's Bible, printed in 1537, and in the Great Bible, which appeared in 1539, the apocryphal books are ſtyled, under an ancient, but inaccurate title, Hagiographa. Gardiner ventured one day, in the preſence of the King, to challenge Cranmer to ſhew any difference between the authority of Scripture, and that of the apoſtolical canons: betraying indeed ſuch weakneſs in the conteſt with the modeſt and learned primate, that the King ſharply told him, that Cranmer was an old and experienced captain, and not to be troubled by freſhmen and novices.

* The ſix articles which eſtabliſhed the doctrines of tranſubſtantiation, communion in one kind, private maſſes, auricular confeſſion, the celibacy of the prieſts, and vows of chaſtity, were juſtly ſaid to be written and executed in blood; and gave a ſanction to the decrees of religious perſecution, which both parties had long cauſe to regret. They were ratified by a Parliament, which, with equal ſervility, laid the civil privileges of the people at the foot of the throne, by ſetting up the king's proclamation; and that of the counſellors of his ſon, when under age, upon the ſame footing with an act of parliament.

† It is well known that Henry left 600 l. per annum to St. George's chapel, Windſor, for ever, for two prieſts to celebrate maſs at his tomb daily, and four yearly obits. The money was otherwiſe applied. Sanders affirms, that he had thoughts of being reconciled to Rome.

ſeverities

ſeverities of which they had vainly laboured to prevent the eſtabliſhment *.

If the firſt break and earlier beams of the Reformation in its dawn indicated "the day-"ſpring" of revelation; the full and cheerful light which enlivened the entire fabric of the eſtabliſhed Church, was derived from the ſame ſource. In contemplating the progreſs of the Reformation in the reign of Edward, we behold the lingering ſhades of ſuperſtition at length depart; while a youthful ſovereign, like Joſiah, "turning to the Lord with all his "heart," proceeded, under the guidance of the venerable Primate of the Church †, to purify the ſanctuary from its remaining pollutions ‡.

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* Cranmer ſtrenuouſly oppoſed the bill for three days, though requeſted by the King to withdraw. In 1542, he procured an act for the advancement of true religion, which lowered the ſpirit of the former acts. See Burnet, and Fox, vol. ii. p. 10. 37. Some of the Reformers conſcientiouſly relinquiſhed a power that muſt have been employed to enforce the ſix articles. Near five hundred perſons were impriſoned on account of them, but releaſed by Cranmer's interceſſion.

† Cranmer was conſiderably aſſiſted by Dr. Cox and Mr. Cheek, the king's preceptors.

‡ In the firſt year of the regency, in 1547, the protector Somerſet, availing himſelf of a power given to the royal proclamation in Henry's reign; after ſuſpending the juriſdiction of the biſhops, appointed a general viſitation throughout England, by viſitors conſiſting of clergy and laity; who were appointed to correct the immoralities and irregularities of the clergy; to extirpate ſuperſtitions, and to re-eſtabliſh further the diſcipline

We ſee an improved miniſtry, arrayed in the decent veſtments of primitive uſe *, no longer adoring the elevated repreſentation of Chriſt's body; but diſtributing its conſecrated emblems †, and inviting all to the communion of that cup, of which all were commanded to partake ‡. We hear awakened

and worſhip of the primitive Church. All images which had not been abuſed to idolatry were to be retained; and the people were to be taught not to contemn ceremonies ſtill continued, but only to avoid particular ſuperſtitions. In the next year images were entirely removed. See Burnet.

* In the rubric of the firſt liturgy, publiſhed in 1548, the alb, the cope, and other veſtments, were enjoined; but in that of the reviſed liturgy, in 1552, the prieſt was reſtricted to the ſurplice, and the biſhop to the rochet. White garments were uſed in the ancient church. See Chryſoſt. Hom. 60.

† In the year 1547, Parliament enacted that the ſacrament ſhould be given in both kinds, and that the people ſhould receive with the prieſt. In the new office ſet forth in 1548, a communion was eſtabliſhed; and, in 1549, Ridley ſummed up the evidence againſt the doctrine of the corporal preſence, after long diſputations had taken place at Oxford, Cambridge, and in parliament. In the rubric of 1548, it was directed, that the wine ſhould be mixed with "a little pure and clean water." This direction however was omitted in the ſervice reviſed in 1551; when ſome alterations were made in paſſages in the conſecration and delivery of the euchariſt, which ſeemed to favour the rejected notions.

‡ It has been remarked, that our Saviour, when delivering the bread, which never has been refuſed, ſays only, Take, eat; but, when giving the cup, he adds, Drink ye *all* of it: as if prophetically warning his diſciples to avoid an error. St. Paul's directions to the Corinthians ſhew, that the apoſtle diſapproved, not of the primitive cuſtom of every one's drinking at the Lord's table, but of drinking *unworthily* and *to exceſs*. 1 Cor. ch. xi. ver. 21—28. Burnet, vol. ii. p. ii. b. 1.

multitudes

multitudes pour out the ſtrains of thankſgiving, in a language underſtood by all, agreeably to ſacred precept *; and taught to conſider Chriſt's meritorious ſufferings as the ſole cauſe of juſtification; and to endeavour to fulfil the terms of acceptance by faith in that atonement, and by earneſt induſtry in the works of practical righteouſneſs.

The conviction which reſulted from the ſlow and gradual operation of truth, while it ſecured the eſtabliſhment of thoſe changes, which, however irregularly accompliſhed †, were effected in conſiſtency with the general wiſh, gratified and impreſſed the public mind. The Reformation therefore took a ſlow and deep root, and was prepared to endure thoſe ſtorms which it afterwards ſuſtained.

A conformity, the effect of ſincere converſion, was very generally eſtabliſhed; though the influence of ancient prejudice, inflamed

* 1 Cor. ch. xiv. ver. 11—15.

† Somerſet and his party effected many changes, without ſufficient attention to the rights and concurrence of the ſpiritual power. He directed that biſhops ſhould be elected by letters patent, and that eccleſiaſtical proceſſes ſhould be made in the king's name, diſſolved and confiſcated the revenues of colleges and chauntries, hoſpitals, fraternities, &c. and many laymen were allowed to hold eccleſiaſtical benefices. See 1 Edw. VI. c. 12.

by

by the degraded prieſthood; together with the remembrance of ſome advantages, which the people had enjoyed under the poſſeſſors of the monaſtic houſes, who often purchaſed favour by hoſpitality and indulgence; induced ſome to wiſh for the reſtitution of the alienated property of the Church to ancient purpoſes. The ſuperſtition which ſwelled in the clamours of popular diſcontent, and which, in its bigotted and rebellious folly, demanded the reſtoration of the maſs and of the ſix articles, ſubſided with returning order; and the principles of the Reformation flowed with the full and irreſiſtable tide of general and well-founded perſuaſion *.

A faith, eſtabliſhed on the evidence of the Scriptures, now generally diſcloſed, could not

* On the acceſſion of Edward, the zeal of the people for the Reformation outran, in ſome inſtances, the public meaſures; and the removal of the Romiſh ſuperſtitions was ſo generally acceptable and popular, that, when Somerſet was diſplaced from the protectorate, Warwick, his ambitious ſucceſſor, did not dare to avow his principles, in oppoſition to the voice of his Sovereign, and the majority of the people; but was obliged to yield to the ſtream, and to court favour by ſupporting the prevailing cauſe; diſguiſing his opinion ſo artfully, as to deceive many, and gratifying his avarice at the ſame time, by removing from their ſeats of eminence, both in Church and State, thoſe who adhered to the Romiſh ſentiments; and unjuſtly

not be deſtroyed; though the untimely death of Edward threw a gloomy ſhade over its proſperity; and the dark and tremendous ſcene which ſucceeded, but contributed to endear the character of the Reformation to general regard. As the abjured ſuperſtition was reſtored, the bigotry and terrors, by which alone it could be ſupported, returned in its train*; but they returned only to ex-

juſtly ſeizing, and converting to private pillage, the rich volumes of ſuperſtition, and of ſuſpected literature, from the public libraries of Oxford. Godwin de Præſul. Anglic. Wood's Hiſt. Antiq. Oxon. l. i. p. 271. Mary, on her acceſſion, was compelled to ſtipulate, that ſhe would preſerve the Reformation; and ſhe could not conſtrain her firſt Parliament to co-operate with her views. Neal, Vol. I. ch. iii. p. 89.

* The cruelties of Mary's reign were dreadful; though they have been, perhaps, exaggerated, Hearn and Collyer have complained of the falſehoods of Fox, whoſe gloomy mind, in baniſhment, received every report and tale conveyed to him. It has been repreſented as an unworthy act to promote the Reformation, that this book was ſet up by the royal authority in the Churches; and in ſome canons, publiſhed in 1571, called a perfect and conſummate hiſtory. See Hearnii Præf. in Camden. Annal. p. 42. Twenty-ſeven perſons, however, are admitted to have ſuffered during this ſhort reign; ſixteen Biſhops were ejected, and three-fourths of the clergy are ſaid to have been deprived of their livings; 2000 of whom were removed for their marriages. Even Bonner was ſatiated with blood, and required the inſtigation of the King and Queen to proceed. Fifty-two perſons were executed in one ſeſſion at Oxford; and a gallows and a gibbet was in almoſt every ſtreet. See Jewell's View of a Seditious Bull, p. 22. The Queen was meditating farther cruelties, when death cloſed the wretched ſcene. See a curious account of circumſtances which prevented the effuſion of blood in Ireland, in Moſheim.

hibit

hibit a ſad contraſt to the glory of that cauſe which with dilated luſtre appeared to decline and ſet. They ſerved but to illuſtrate, in ſtrong and indelible features, the character of that faith which they laboured, by oppreſſive violence, to deſtroy, and the excellency of thoſe principles which triumphed in oppoſition to their decrees.

In vain, by trampling on the inſtitutions of Edward, did the infatuated and miſguided Queen ſeek to leſſen the reverence of the public, for the ſervice which he had eſtabliſhed. In vain, by endeavours to ſilence * or diſcountenance the advocates of reform †, did ſhe ſtrive to conceal the truth, that glared with fulleſt teſtimony. Thoſe who were ‡ "again

* All perſons throughout England were forbidden to preach without a licence from Gardiner; a reſtriction deſigned to operate as an interdict. Coverdale, Biſhop of Exeter, and Hooper of Glouceſter, incurred the diſpleaſure of the Council, by preaching with diſregard of the prohibition.

† Peter Martyr, Bernardin Ochinus, John A-laſco, and many other foreigners, left the country.

‡ 2 Peter, ch. i. ver. 20. The Parliament indeed, which the Queen aſſembled, ſeconded her views, heſitating only when they were apprehenſive of refunding the poſſeſſions of the Church. The Pope was obliged, in this reſpect, to aſſent by his Legate, though with words of inſidious reſerve, to the continuance of ſome lands in the hands of rapacity. See Harleian Miſcell. Vol. II. p. 264—266. Sir Henry Spelman informs us, that the Pope would not concede a diſpenſation for the ſale or allotment of the religious houſes; and the reverential

" again entangled and overcome, could not " drag back a reluctant nation to the pollu- " tions from which it had escaped * ;" and the unholy zeal which directed its vindictive fury against the unshaken confessors of the faith, but exalted their virtues to the glory of martyrdom, and conferred on them the radiance of an heavenly crown.

The conviction of the truth of those principles, which Mary had vainly endeavoured to destroy, had spread so generally and so deeply ; that no sooner had Elizabeth, on ascending the throne, accepted the Scriptures as " the word of truth †" and law of reverence, than the pillars of superstition, which had

tial fears of the people refused, for some years, to inhabit them. Similar impressions do not seem to have prevailed among the possessors of the alienated lands. The account, however, of the fate of many of those who shared the plunder, may, without superstition, be allowed to have been remarkable, whatever conclusions may be drawn upon the subject. See Spelman's Hist. of Sacrilege.

* The Protestants expressed their regret at the change with strong representations. " Invenimus," says Jewell, in a letter to Peter Martyr, " passim votivas reliquias divorum, clavos quibus fatui Christum crucifixum fuisse somniabant, & nescio quas portiunculas sacræ crucis. Magarum & veneficarum ubique immensum excreverat. Ecclesiæ Cathedrales nihil aliud erant quam speluncæ latronum, aut si quid nequius aut fœdius dici potest; si quid erat obstinatæ nequitiæ, id totum erat in presbyteris, illis præsertim qui aliquando stetissent a nostra sententia."

† See Holinshed, and Strype's Annals, p. 30.

been

been again ſet up by the bigotry of the court, ſuddenly gave way. The intereſted and hireling advocates of a cauſe which they had maintained, chiefly with views of ſecular policy, deſerted its defence; and again diſſembled, or changed, in accommodation to exiſting motives; and Elizabeth was led by her wiſeſt ſtateſmen to contemplate the people as eager to throw off the yoke * to which they had been conſtrained to ſubmit; and proceeded with judicious meaſures to reeſtabliſh the reformed worſhip of Edward's

* If the bulk of the nation had not been inclined to the Reformation, Elizabeth would not have ſacrificed her own opinions, which favoured at leaſt ſome of the doctrines, and preſerved in her own chapel the objects and external magnificence of the Romiſh worſhip. It was neceſſary, indeed, to reſtrain the zeal of the people, by proclamations, from intemperate meaſures; and the proſperity of her reign, notwithſtanding the attempts of Romaniſts and Puritans, is attributed to the general ſatisfaction of the people in the eſtabliſhed religion. Of the fourteen biſhops who remained on her acceſſion, thirteen, it is true, refuſed again to change, and take the oath of ſupremacy, though moſt of them had ſworn to the oath in the reign of Henry; and one of them (Tunſtal) had written in its defence. Of the inferior clergy, only 80 rectors and vicars, 50 prebendaries, 15 heads of colleges, 12 archdeacons, and as many deans, ſacrificed their intereſts to their principles; ſo little was the body of the clergy attached to, or influenced by, the religion which had been profeſſed. The Proteſtants in the former reign had ſhewn a conſcientious conviction. See Camden.

time;

time *; to resume with softened, though still indeed with too lofty claims, the supremacy which had been again surrendered to a foreign power †; and to advance the Reformation nearly to that perfection of doctrine, discipline, and worship, which it now displays.

To the influence then of sacred truth, beaming from the Scriptures, are we chiefly indebted for the rise, progress, and completion

* 1 Eliz. c. 2. Burnet, Vol. II. fol. 386. The second Liturgy of Edward was re-established, with some alterations, by the Queen's authority. The petition, to be "delivered from "the Bishop of Rome, and all his detestable enormities," was expunged from the Liturgy. The form at the delivery of the Eucharist, in Edward's first book, and that substituted for it in the second, were united; and the Rubric, which stated the kneeling not to have been intended on account of any real and essential presence of Christ, was omitted, probably with design to conciliate the Romanists. The spiritual Presence, however, was asserted in the Articles; and, at first, in some terms which the Convocation rejected as superfluous. Jewell complained of tardy measures; Ἱπποι βραδυποδες, morantur currum, said the zealous Reformer. See Burnet, fol. 3. p. B. 6. Collect of Records, p. 58.

† The 1st Eliz. c. 1. though it united the supremacy and visitatorial power to the Crown, and not, as did 26 Henry VIII. c. 1. to the King and his heirs; though it directed that those who were to exercise this authority should be appointed by letters patent, and restricted arbitrary constructions of heresy, still assigned jurisdictions and spiritual pre-eminences to the Queen, which required subsequent qualifications, and countenanced intolerant proceedings; as those of the High Commission Court, &c. See Stillingfleet, concerning the Illegality of the Eccles. Commiss.

of

of the Reformation, by gentle tranſitions in this country.

Not however ſolely to the reſtoration of the Scriptures to general notice, but to the juſt and judicious principles upon which they were explained, muſt be attributed the ſincerity of the doctrine and worſhip eſtabliſhed in the perfected character of the Church. The ſacred writings, while they were reverenced with implicit deference, by our Reformers, upon every point on which they conveyed information, were not conſidered by them, as by ſome they were prepoſterouſly repreſented to be, ſo entirely the rule of human actions, as to ſuperſede ſecular juriſdiction; or to preclude eccleſiaſtical direction in matters of changeable nature and contingent exigency; a notion leading to extravagant diſtortions of ſacred inſtruction, and pregnant with miſchief to ſociety. The rights of the temporal authority were fully acknowledged; and a diſcretionary power, we have ſeen, of decreeing ſubordinate particulars, was underſtood to be veſted in the Church; and was to be exerciſed with no reſtriction but that of conformity to the principles of revelation, and reſpect for the conſtitutions of civil government.

The

The firſt aſſertors of reform*, alſo, while they reſtored the Scriptures to their excluſive authority in all points of ſpecific communication; prudently foreſaw, that the wantonneſs of private conſtruction would engender diverſity of ſentiment, in the interpretation of revealed doctrines. Anxious to preſerve the efficacy of that faith, which, in its genuine operation, conduces to union of ſentiment; and to prevent "the unſtable from wreſting the Scrip-"tures to their own deſtruction," they delivered very admirable precepts of caution; and after mature and comprehenſive examination; after frequent diſcuſſion, and triumphant controverſy, in which candour and

* Some foreign Reformers carried their veneration for the Scriptures ſo far, as to regard them as the excluſive rule of direction. Hooker ſtates it to be, the head theorem of the Puritans, that the Scripture of God is ſuch a rule of human actions, that ſimply whatſoever we do, and are not by it directed thereunto, the ſame is ſin; an opinion, as Hooker and Warburton have obſerved, tending to promote alterations in civil government; and having indeed actually effected them in our country. From this principle alſo aroſe the vague and perverted application of Scripture examples, and the profane and diſguſting abuſe of the ſacred language in ordinary life, which produced ſo much miſchief in the laſt age; which was the characteriſtic of hypocriſy; which tended to damp genuine piety, and excited an unhappy ſpirit of levity and diſregard to religion. See Hooker, Eccleſ. Pol. b. ii.

ſtrength of argument were conſpicuous *, compoſed the full confeſſion of their faith; framed on the declaration of Scripture, as interpreted with deference to primitive expoſition, and the tradition of the Church when Catholic and uniform; but with diſregard of partial conſtruction, and with rejection of unwarranted reports.

Hence, with a fidelity expreſſive of thoſe revealed doctrines which influenced the practice of the pureſt ages, the enlightened faith of our Church contemplates, in the three perſons of the eternal Trinity, the united glory of the joint authors of the creation, redemption, and ſanctification of man; entitled to the praiſes and thankſgiving of thoſe who are baptized into the Church in their ſacred

* In the frequent diſputes between the advocates for the two Churches, the Proteſtants diſplayed irrefragable argument and great moderation, while the baffled Romaniſts betrayed only the weakneſs of their cauſe, and the perverſeneſs of their temper. Jewell's biographer ſays of the Papiſts, at the Weſtminſter conference in Elizabeth's reign, that, like Verres, non quid reſponderent, ſed quemadmodum non reſponderent laborabant. In the diſpute before Convocation in 1553, conceded with pretended candour, the Proteſtants compelled the Romaniſts to admit, that, upon their principles, Chriſt had, in his laſt ſupper, held himſelf in his hand, and had ſwallowed and eaten himſelf. The Romaniſts, however, claimed the victory, and renewed the debate. Weſton, the Prolocutor, concluded it, by ſaying, "You have the word, but we have the ſword." Burnet, Collyer, &c.

name

name; to the excluſion of the worſhip of all dependant beings, however "highly fa-"voured *," however elevated in celeſtial dignity, and ſanctified in triumphant righteouſneſs. Looking but to one Mediator, even Chriſt Jeſus, it reſtraineth all indirect ſupplication, injurious to the Divine interceſſion; and addreſſeth only to the everlaſting God its prayers for the aſſiſtant ſervices of thoſe holy Angels, who by "his appointment" alone can "ſuccour and defend us on earth†;" and who if, as "beholding the face of the "Father ‡," they may be conceived, with pious and unceaſing charity to intreat for the ſucceſsful warfare of the Church on earth §; can ſtill have no title to that invocation which aſcribes Divine attributes to created beings; and miſleads the attention of Chriſt's Diſciples to forbidden worſhip of thoſe who are

* Luke, ch. i. ver. 28.

† See Collect for St. Michael and All Angels.

‡ Matt. ch. xviii. ver. 10.

§ Rev. ch. v. ver. 8. Luke, ch. xv. ver. 10. and Zech. ch. i. ver. 12, 13. where perhaps the interceding Angel is to be conſidered as the Divine Logos; the Angel of the New Covenant. Mr. Eyre, in his Letter to Mr. Churton, attempts, from theſe and other texts, to juſtify the invocation of Saints, in the Romiſh Church: but however they may tend to prove that the Saints take an intereſt in the welfare of the Church, they will not authoriſe ſupplication to them. Moſes, Samuel,

are but fellow-ſervants in the adoration of a jealous God; the ſole object of devotion; the only ſource of bleſſing to mankind. Reverencing, however, with preceding generations, thoſe who, by Divine approbation, or diſtinguiſhed righteouſneſs, were commended as examples to the world; it intreats for its members, that they may be empowered to follow "the bleſſed Saints in all virtuous "and godly living *," and preſerves the inſtructive memorial of their fidelity by appointed feſtivals.

Including in its comprehenſive conception of the Divine ſcheme of the reſtoration of mankind, an extent of atonement commenſurate with the effect of that diſobedience by which "infirmity was made permanent †," our Church preſcribes no limits to the expanſion of God's mercy, while it repreſents the vicarial ſacrifice as the only meritorious cauſe of ſalvation.

Noah, and Job, are mentioned in Jer. ch. xv. ver. 1. and Ezek. ch. xiv. ver. 14. hypothetically, not as interceſſors, but as perſons who, if living, would be approved in the ſight of God. If the writing, which came from Elijah to Jehoram, proceeded from Elijah the Tiſhbite, it is more probable that it was prophetically dictated, as Kimchi has ſuggeſted, than that it was compoſed by Elijah, as Mr. Eyre ſuppoſes, after the prophet had quitted the world.

* Collect to All Saints Day.

† 2 Eſdras, ch. iii. ver. 22. Heb. ch. ix. ver. 12—28.

Unfolding

Unfolding the character of an univerſal covenant, graciouſly held out from heaven, but conditionally to be appropriated, it maintains the general neceſſity of faith in the ſufferings, and obſervance of the laws, of Chriſt: the former availing to juſtification only as it implies a reverence for a Saviour's mediation, and generates obedience; the latter acceptable, only, as diſplayed in co-operation with the ſuggeſtions of God's grace, and in conformity to the terms of the Goſpel *. Thus is reſcued the great doctrine of Divine atonement, in excluſion to the fancied efficacy of all mortal ſatisfaction or interceſſion—to the ſuppreſſion, on the one hand, of that preſumptuous confidence which razeth the foundations of our hope, to erect the Babel of a fictitious merit on an human baſis; and, on the other, to the removal of that dangerous deluſion, which, gazing on an abſtracted faith, overlooks the ſalutary and eſſential doctrines of righteouſneſs and moral virtue †.

Reading

* Homily on the Nativity.

† Article XI. and Homily on the Salvation of all Mankind. The Romaniſts attributed juſtification excluſively to good works; afterwards explaining, of works proceeding from faith, and with ſubtleties of firſt and ſecond juſtification, or of faith and ſanctification. The Lutherans, in vehement oppoſition to this, attributed juſtification to faith alone; and ſome of our

Reading, in the proclaimed predeſtination of God's purpoſe, no abſolute and irreſpective decree of unconditional election *, much leſs of irremediable reprobation, our Church conſiders God's foreknowledge as conſiſtent with the freedom of human actions; and election as importing a foreſeen conformity to the Divine will †. Preaching the neceſſity and

early writers dilated ſo forcibly on faith, as to invalidate good works. Our Church however admits the general neceſſity of good works; differing from the Calviniſts in conſidering them not merely as effects, but as co-efficient conditions with faith.

* The Inſtitution of a Chriſtian Man rejects the curious conceit of predeſtination, and teaches, that we ſhould "always be "afraid of the weakneſs and in-bred corruption of the fleſh." The Neceſſary Erudition of a Chriſtian Man admits the title of the whole human race; and aſſerts, that God's promiſes are ſuſpended on conditions, and ſuppoſe our endeavours to obedience. See Collyer, Vol. II. p. ii. b. iii. fol. 188. The homily againſt the Fear of Death was deſigned to ſhew that aſſurance of eternal happineſs is the reſult of a godly and virtuous life. In a Preface to an Expoſition of the Decalogue, by Biſhop Hooper, is this remarkable paſſage: "It is not a Chriſ-"tian man's part to ſay that God hath written fatal laws, as "the Stoic, and with neceſſity of deſtiny violently pulleth one "by the hair into heaven, and thruſteth the other headlong "into hell. The cauſe of rejection or damnation, is ſin in "man, which will not hear, neither receive, the promiſe of the "Goſpel." See alſo Latimer's Sermons; Redmayne's Treatiſe; Jewell's Apol. c. 18; Homilies on the Miſery of Man, and on declining from God; Nichol's Vindication.

† See the Homilies, Liturgy, and Articles. Moſheim, and other writers, repreſent the Church of England as Calviniſtical, in the points above referred to; and Burnet ſtates, that the firſt Reformers were generally in the Sublapſarian hypotheſis,

and ſaving efficacy of God's grace, which inſpires and aſſiſts every good deſign, it aſcribes to it no irreſiſtible control, or irreverſible reſtraint *; but while it exhorts to fervent ſupplication, and reverence for the appointed means of its conveyance, it enforces alſo a vigilant regard to Scripture, of which every text commands obedience; and a cultivation of that righteous diſpoſition, which, under

ſis, which maintained a partial ſalvation by Chriſt. It has however been often ſhewn, that the Creed, Homilies, Liturgy, Articles, and Catechiſm of our Church, do not in their general conſtruction ſupport the Calvinian rigours, whatever ambiguous expreſſions ſome of them may contain. They admit the redemption of the whole world by Chriſt; the freedom of the human will; the acceptable nature of good works, and the poſſibility of a fall from grace. They decide not with St. Auſtin on the fate of infants unbaptized, but it is ſtated in the Rubric, that thoſe who are baptized, and die before actual ſin, are undoubtedly ſaved. There is therefore at leaſt reaſon to doubt, whether thoſe who framed the 17th Article deſigned, as Burnet deems probable, to aſſert the doctrine of abſolute decrees; and it is a plauſible opinion at leaſt, that "by thoſe "whom he hath choſen in Chriſt," from Epheſ. ch. i. ver. 4. may be meant only thoſe whoſe obedience in Chriſt God foreſaw, "elect, according to the foreknowledge of God," 1 Peter, ch. i. ver. 2. The words admit of a conſtruction conſiſtent with the doctrine of conditional decrees; and the annexed cautions require that they ſhould be ſo interpreted. It is certain that the Reformers were fully impreſſed with the neceſſity of moral righteouſneſs, and inculcate its precepts with unwearied diligence; and if the Articles are Calviniſtical, it may be enquired, why the Calviniſts petitioned againſt the literal and grammatical ſenſe, on the appearance of Charles's declaration, and have ſo often wiſhed to alter them.

* Homily on the Reſurrection, and 16th Article.

the influence of deſcending favour, offers up the fragrance of acceptable productions to God.

If we conſider the practical application of theſe doctrines, as illuſtrated in the external inſtitutions and public worſhip of the Church, we ſhall find equal reaſon to approve the ſteady attention paid to the inſtructions of revelation. The ſacramental appointments, reſtricted to the initiatory and commemorative rites, which were ordained by Chriſt himſelf as the effectual means and pledges of Divine grace, the laſting arguments of truth, the perpetual monuments, on which the principal doctrines of the faith are inſcribed in indelible and impreſſive characters, were retained to animate the faith; and advance, by the operation of the Holy Ghoſt, the general work of ſalvation in our Church *.

The Liturgy, and Forms of Thankſgiving and Prayer, compoſed on early models, with

* Waterland has ſhewn, by hiſtorical ſtatement, the utility of the ſacraments, in an important point of view, as having confirmed and ſecured the prime articles of the faith, through ſucceſſive ages; baptiſm hath guarded the doctrine of the Trinity, by a form which unqueſtionably demonſtrates the exiſtence of three perſons in the ſacred union; and the Euchariſt has preſerved the juſt doctrine of the Divine and human nature of Chriſt againſt various heretics. See Preface to the Doctrinal Uſe of the Chriſtian Sacraments.

ſelection

ſelection from ancient litanies, were perfected, after frequent reviſion, with admirable conformity to the great principles of veneration for the Divine attributes, and the expreſſion, and encouragement of human gratitude and humility. Contrived to regulate the deſultory fervors of the imagination, by the guidance of a chaſtened and reverential ſpirit of piety *, they are ſtill calculated

* Preſcribed forms of prayer are authoriſed by the example of the Jews, by the inſtructions of Chriſt, of the Apoſtles, and of the Primitive Church. See Old Teſt. paſſim. Matt. ch. vi. ver. 9. ch. xxvi. ver. 30. Epheſ. ch. v. ver. 19. 1 Tim. ch. ii. ver. 1, 2. Auguſt. Serm. 58. c. 10. tom. v. col. 342. Euſeb. Hiſt. Baſil. Epiſt. ad Neocæſar. Lightfoot's Works, Vol. I. p. 922, 942—6. The Liturgies aſcribed to St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Peter, are conſidered as ſpurious; that attributed to St. James, was received as genuine by the Greek Church, is cited by the Council of Trullo, and maintained by antient writers. Collyer, p. ii. b. iv. p. 252. Bingham's Antiq. b. ii. ch. vi. §. 2. There are others aſſigned to Clement, Baſil, Chryſoſtom, and Ambroſe. Prayers, as expreſſive of deliberate and permanent impreſſions, cannot be too cautiouſly worded. Unprepared ſtrains of devotion are ſuitable only to the individual; and congregations ſhould not be hurried away by the crude rhapſodies and irregular fervors which the judgment hath no time to conſider. In the time of Cromwell, when the people would not bear the uſe of the Liturgy, ſome of the clergy formed their prayers from it, and repeated them, as extemporaneous, with great applauſe; as did Sanderſon and Bull; the latter of whom brought over many of his family to the Church ſervice, on explaining to them the harmleſs artifice which he had uſed in thus pronouncing the baptiſmal ſervice. See Nelſon's Life of Bull. Perhaps a ſimilar plan might be ſucceſsfully adopted by the regular clergy in preaching; though it muſt be with great diſcretion. See 1 Cor. ch. ix. ver. 20.

to

to awaken and animate religious affections, and to unite the hearts and voices of Chriſt's Diſciples, in the performance of ſocial worſhip.

The ritual appointments and exterior arrangements of the Church, moderated with regard to the ſolemnity of public ſervice, and with conſideration of abuſes long experienced, retained the decency of order and reverential obſervance *; at the ſame time that they were reformed from ſuperfluous ceremonies and decorations, which had been found to miſlead the fancy. The judicious ſpirit of ſober and diſcriminating reflection perceived, that the ſignal and expreſſive token of admiſſion to the Church of Chriſt †, and the outward teſtimony of reſpect at the Lord's Table, might be preſerved with ſalutary effect; without exciting any falſe or miſchievous notions of their intention, or affording any countenance to exploded errors. If the veſtments of primitive decorum were objected to, as recalling the image of a

* See in Hutchinſon's Hiſt. of Durham, Vol. I. p. 453, an account of irregularities which have reſulted from a neglect of public authority.

† The croſs in baptiſm was very ancient. See Tertull. de Coronâ; Cyprian. de Unitate; and Prudent. l. ii. c. ſym.

corrupt

corrupt and ſuperſtitious prieſthood, it was preſumed that the objection would be tranſient; and expire with the memory of thoſe, who were ſolicitous to preſerve the reſemblance. It was conſidered that abuſes only, and the incentives to them, ſhould be removed; and that ſome ſimple diſtinctions were ſuited to the appearance and offices of public celebration; and were authoriſed by the example and ſentiments of every age. In particulars of ſubordinate concern, the impreſſions of ancient cuſtom were not rudely diſturbed; and the public authority was rather inclined to regulate, and check the increaſe of ceremonies, than to diſcountenance thoſe harmleſs practices, which reſt with the diſcretion of the individual.

While the pageantry and the offenſive and unmeaning parts of the Romiſh ſervice were ſuppreſſed; the affecting ſolemnity of choral celebration, and ſomewhat of the ancient pomp of worſhip, was reverently preſerved. Thoſe, who have wiſhed to diſcard from our Church the aſſiſtance of an art, which is conceived to be ſubſervient to the animation of celeſtial piety; and which is allowed to awaken religious affections, and to increaſe the warmth of earthly devotion, appear to

ſpiritualize

ſpiritualize too much in notional refinement; and to cheriſh ſpeculations more ſuited to ſolitary and abſtracted contemplation, than to the general expreſſion of ſocial worſhip *. That the human heart ſhould be allowed to profit by impreſſions of which it is moſt ſuſceptible, and that a ſalutary influence ſhould be imparted by ordinary means, is not unreaſonable.

In theſe ſimilar ſubjects of conſideration, the precedents of ſacred appointment ſhould not be overlooked †. It is certain that the general claſſes of mankind are not inſenſible to the ſubſidiary aids of devotion; and that religion may be rendered more awful, in the eyes of many, by exterior circumſtance. The venerable ſtructures which did honour to the munificent piety of former times, and exhibit ſomewhat of auguſt affinity to the ſolemn grandeur of religion; and even thoſe decorations and productions of elegance which have no ſeductive tendency, may produce a ſalutary and beneficial effect. Our Reformers furniſhed no example to thoſe, who, while they

* The Commiſſioners in 1689 propoſed to put down chaunting in cathedrals.

† 1 Kings, ch. vii. 2 Chron. ch. vii. ver. 6. Pſalm xcii. ver. 150. See alſo Rev. ch. v. ver. 8. ch. xiv. ver. 2. Auguſt. Confeſſ.

"dwell

" dwell in cieled houſes," ſhew not an anxiety for the buildings dedicated to the Lord's glory. They wiſhed to diſcountenance external ſplendour but as it led to evil; and were aware that religious edifices and religious worſhip might be deſpoiled of impreſſive ornament and reverential tokens, without being in any degree more ſuitable to the perfection of the Supreme Being. They relinquiſhed with regret ſome of thoſe repreſentations, which, as ſilent monitors, inſtruct; and contended with juſtifiable firmneſs againſt the ſpirit of innovation which endeavoured to deſtroy even the decent comelineſs of the ſervice that was preſerved. Every teſtimony of unperverted regard to the glory of God they ſought to encourage; and had their councils been followed, the ſequeſtered revenues of the Church, which were waſted in laviſh expenditure and private embezzlement, would have been converted to public inſtitutions, and have conferred luſtre and ſubſtantial benefit on the country *.

Conſidered,

* Henry, in compliance with Cranmer's advice, did erect ſix new biſhoprics; Weſtminſter, Cheſter, Glouceſter, Peterborough, Oxford, and Briſtol; he alſo converted ſome priories into deaneries, with proviſion for donations to the poor. This, however, by no means came up to the ideas of Cranmer, who had

Conſidered, or with reference to preceding abuſes, or with regard to the permanent propenſities of men, the external ſtructure and ordinances of our Church, were framed with judicious and prudent regulation. Modelled in agreement with the inſtructions of revelation, they diſplay a ſimplicity equally remote from ſuperſtition and irreverence; and it appears that the practical, as well as the ſpeculative, principles of the Reformation, are grounded on conſiderations decidedly important to the intereſts of religion.

Scripture, then, is not that precarious and uncertain rule, which it has been injuriouſly repreſented to be, by thoſe, who would place infallibility on an human tribunal, and conſecrate the deciſions of earthly conceit. By a faithful adherence to it, as to a ſtandard of ſalvation, the reſtorers of our Church were conducted through ſucceſſive reigns with gradual advancement to truth; ſeldom declining

had at firſt recommended to the King to appropriate 18,000 l. per annum as a revenue for eighteen biſhops and cathedrals; and had projected other liberal ſchemes. But though a revenue of upwards of 131,000 l. or, according to Lord Herbert's ſtatement, of 161,000 l. had been collected from the ſuppreſſed houſes; 108,000 l. of which were aſſigned to the King (and the lands, in ſome inſtances, were not rated at a tenth part of their value), no ſufficient ſupply remained; the money being rapidly conſumed in conſtructing and ſtrengthening forts, in peculation, and improvident expence.

by

by any unconſtrained relapſe into error, and happily extricating themſelves from the difficulties and impediments which embarraſſed their progreſs.

If we conſider what various and diſcordant opinions are ſet afloat by the agitation of any great and momentous queſtion; how rarely agreement can be obtained, eſpecially when religious prejudices and temporal intereſts are at the ſame time concerned, we muſt be convinced that no power but that of truth, could have effected the eſtabliſhment of principles, ſo ſubverſive of antient perſuaſions; ſo fatal to great and connected departments of ſociety, as were thoſe adopted at the Reformation. By a regard to this rule of Scripture, will all opinions be finally regulated in conformity to one eſſential faith, and not by liſtening to the vague and undefined pretences of tradition, or to the capricious ſuggeſtions of human vanity. By a reference to it, muſt every deviation from Chriſt's precepts be aſcertained and reformed. Vain and fruitleſs were it to maintain what it condemns; vain and ineffectual were it to reſiſt what it enjoins. Its force finally muſt predominate: not however as prejudiced conceptions may imagine, not as private conſtruction may dictate, but as prevailing

prevailing evidence requires; as diſpaſſionate ſtatement and ſober conſideration determine, muſt its revelations be interpreted and received.

Anxiouſly as our Church hath laboured to illuſtrate every page of the ſacred writings, it hath found no cauſe to depart from thoſe eſſential principles, which, in conſiſtency with early and unadulterated conſtruction, were eſtabliſhed as the baſis of its regulations. Yet hath it no views which would obſtruct the operation of truth. It evades no enquiry, it retreats from no temperate diſcuſſions; it will not however ſacrifice its deliberate faith to every novel ſuggeſtion, nor alter its creed in accommodation to every new teacher. Diſcovering no acceſſion of light, it refuſeth to tamper with God's word, or to relinquiſh its well-founded conviction. Conſcious that, "ere the preſent years were "ſought out, and ere ever the inventions of "thoſe that now ſin were turned, before "they were ſealed that have gathered faith "for a treaſure *," all things relating to matters of doctrine were conſidered, it continues to reſpect the deciſions of thoſe who, with

* 2 Eſdras, ch. vi. ver 5, 6.

pre-

pre-eminent advantages and comprehenſive examination, determined. Willing to wave unavailing queſtions, and " perverſe diſput- " ings," and to promote the practical improvement of mankind, it is ſolicitous only that " faith ſhould flouriſh, and corruption " be overcome; and that the truth, which " has been ſo long without fruit *," correſpondent to its excellency, ſhould be reverenced in its important maxims, and be obeyed in its ſalutary and eternal laws.

* 2 Eſdras, ch. vi. ver. 28.

SERMON VII.

2 TIM. ii. 19, 20.

Nevertheleſs the foundation ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity. But in a great houſe there are not only veſſels of gold and of ſilver, but alſo of wood and of earth; and ſome to honour, and ſome to diſhonour.

IN condemning the profane and cankering vanity of thoſe, who, "concerning the "truth, had erred," and who had "over-"thrown the faith of ſome," the apoſtle reflects with conſolation, that nevertheleſs the foun ation ſtandeth ſure; on which all who ſhould reſt, as on a ſolid principle, ſhould be confirmed under the ſeal * of the Divine ap-

* 2 Tim. ch. ii. ver. 19. 2 Cor. ch. i. ver. 22. ch. v. ver. 5. Epheſ. ch. i. ver. 13. ch. iv. ver. 30.

probation; characterized as the Diſciples of God, amidſt the unworthy, and ſanctified as heirs of eternal glory.

In reverence for that ſacred foundation, which was eſtabliſhed as the ground-work of reform in this country, it is ſatisfactory to conſider, that its immoveable principles were uniformly reſpected; and hence it was, that thoſe who "ſet forward the work" perceived it to proſper in their hands; and like the returning captives who rebuilt the Temple of Jeruſalem, "having ſeparated themſelves "from the filthineſs of the land," refuſed again "to break the commandments of the "Lord, and join in affinity with the people "of abominations;" and "experienced the "hand of God upon them for good*," enabling them to finiſh it according to his commandment, notwithſtanding the machinations of thoſe who ſtrove to fruſtrate their purpoſe, and by concealed and open induſtry to undermine and overturn the fabric.

In reviewing the ſtruggles of that antichriſtian ſuperſtition which writhed under the foot of the victorious faith, and the exertions of

* Ezra, ch. iii. ver. 8. ch. iv. ver. 5. ch. vi. ver. 14, 21. ch. viii. ver. 22. ch. ix. ver. 14.

that

that wild ſpirit of innovation which roſe into vigour, under powerful and ambitious patronage, we lament indeed, in their firſt miſchief, ſome wounds inflicted on the ſtrength and beauty of the aſcendant form; but which diſturbed not the ſteady and conſiſtent firmneſs of the Reformation, preſerving its character unſhaken by danger, and moderate in its moſt triumphant ſucceſs.

It ſhould not detract from the reverence due to a Church, which hath "holden faſt "Chriſt's name," and hath not denied his faith, if "a few things" ſhould be found written againſt it; nor need there be any ſolicitude to deny that individuals have often deviated from the maxims of public profeſſion. Impartial reflection may exult, however, on a retroſpect of the operation of thoſe principles which are conſecrated in characteriſtic diſtinction of our Church; and the influence of which it would be injurious not to conſider in the eſtimation of its pretenſions. In the proſecution of our ſubject, therefore, we ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate their effect through ſucceſſive periods; not by ſtrained and unqualified panegyric, but by a reference to ſubſtantial and incontrovertible proofs of excellence.

Amidſt the viciſſitudes in which the Church may be contemplated, in the times that ſucceeded its full eſtabliſhment, it will be found, if conſidered in its diſtinct character, to deſerve admiration under three principal points of view. Firſt, as having maintained a general truth and conſiſtency in its doctrines; ſecondly, as diſtinguiſhed for its moderation and tolerant ſpirit; and thirdly, as having advanced the eſſential intereſts of the country, as well by conſpiring with the deſigns of civil liberty, as by promoting religious and moral virtues.

The changes which took place in the public Creed and worſhip from the firſt commencement of reform till its eſtabliſhment under Elizabeth, were, if we except the violent and partial reſtitution of the Romiſh faith in the reign of Mary, but ſucceſſive ſteps in the gradual advancement of true religion, and have been idly urged in proof of the fickle and inconſtant faith of the nation.

That ſome compliant and intereſted men bowed with their ſovereign to the idols which they had been enlightened to deſpiſe *, and ſacrificed their faith to conſiderations of

* 2 Kings, ch. v. ver. 18.

earthly

earthly advantage, muſt indeed be confeſſed; but no proofs can be adduced that the reſpectable and predominant part of the kingdom at any time relapſed into the deluſions which they had abjured, however ſlowly they might relinquiſh ſome of the errors of inveterate ſuperſtition.

Since the period that the national faith was expreſſed in preciſe articles, ratified by the whole Clergy in Convocation *, it does not appear that it has been neceſſary to change thoſe articles; and whatever tranſient impreſſions may have been made by prevailing notions, on the public mind, they have not been allowed to operate ſo far, as to lead to the permanent introduction of popular fancies into the appointed forms of profeſſion, or to vitiate eſtabliſhed ordinances. If, by the incautious conceſſions, or haſty declarations, of any of its leading members, our Church has been betrayed into the apparent confirmation of principles incompatible with the ſincerity of the Scriptural doctrine, it has ſpeedily recovered its conſiſtent tone; and its

* Four Articles which ſtood in Edward's code, relating to the reſurrection of the dead, the unperiſhable nature of the ſoul, the Millenarian heretics, and univerſal ſalvation, were omitted from the Articles confirmed in Convocation in 1562.

declared Creed and avowed faith have not varied *.

The chief diverſity of ſentiment, which has prevailed among its members, has been in thoſe ſpeculative and curious points, upon which the framers of our Articles, conſcious of the clouds which encircle the Divine Councils, and not preſuming to break the ſeals of God's judgments, deſignedly, uſed a great latitude of expreſſion: deſirous of leaving all to abound in their own ſenſe; and willing to ſuppreſs the agitations and bitterneſs of controverſy, by ſhutting up God's promiſes in general declarations of Scripture.

That doctrines, capable of being conſidered in ſuch different points of view as are thoſe which reſpect the extent of God's decrees, the liberty of the human will, and the operations of the Divine Grace, ſhould continue, as they have ever done, to excite various opi-

† Archbiſhop Whitgift, with ſome of the Biſhops, having been haſtily led to ſubſcribe to the Lambeth Articles, which were deſigned to bind the Univerſity of Cambridge to the rigours of Calviniſm, was compelled, by Elizabeth's orders, to ſuppreſs them. Dr. Reynolds propoſed them again, for acceptance, at the Hampton-Court conference; but was as unſucceſsful in this as in many other points: they were, indeed, received, by Uſher's management, in Ireland.

nions,

nions, is not ſurpriſing *. If, likewiſe, we allow ſomething for the influence which the feelings have over the judgment, we ſhall not wonder that thoſe, whoſe averſion to the Romiſh Church had been originally founded on the practical abuſes which it countenanced, and had increaſed, under perſonal ſufferings, in the exile which, in times of perſecution, they endured, ſhould, on their return to their country, betray ſomewhat of extravagance, in their diſpoſition, to every principle hoſtile to the faith which they had renounced; and endeavour to circulate the doctrines and ſchemes which were moſt adverſe to its intereſts.

The deſire of commending the excluſive efficacy of the Divine atonement, in oppo-

* The difficulty of reconciling the preſcience of God with the free-will of man, is a difficulty of natural religion. The exiſtence of both muſt be admitted, though they never have been, nor probably ever will be, ſatisfactorily explained. St. Auſtin, who maintains the conſiſtency of the doctrines, repreſents the denial of God's preſcience as abſolute inſanity; and aſſerts a liberation from ſin by grace. Religioſus animus, ſays the Father, utrumque eligit, utrumque confitetur. De Civit. Dei, l. v. c. 9. The ſpeculative doctrines of faith, which did not affect the practice, were diſcuſſed with but little warmth at the firſt ſeparation from the Church of Rome; points of diſcipline and ceremony engroſſed the chief attention. As both the Arminian and Calviniſtical parties claim the articles on theſe doubtful points, we muſt admit, at leaſt, that they are framed with comprehenſive latitude. It is remarkable that the Church of Rome did not decide on the five points canvaſſed at the Synod of Dort.

ſition

ſition to the fancies of mortal interceſſion and human merit, hurried the Reformers on the Continent, and thoſe who imbibed their ideas, to dilate, with incautious and exceſſive enthuſiaſm, on gratuitous juſtification; ſo as to invalidate the important doctrine of free-will, and to diſparage the neceſſary condition of obedience.

The diſpoſition to reward and employ men who had ſuffered for their adherence to religion; and the indulgence ſhewn to ſuch opinions as had no reference to ancient abuſes, nor interfered with preſent regulations, occaſioned the reception of many perſons into eccleſiaſtical departments who were ſtrongly tinctured with Calvinian principles; which were induſtriouſly propagated * and patronized by many eminent men †; and liſtened to the more readily by many of our

* The Puritans uſed every art to advance their opinions. In an impreſſion of the Common Prayer, publiſhed with pretended authority by Richard Jugge, in 1577, the whole order of private baptiſm and of confirmation was omitted. The Geneva Bible was printed with miſchievous notes; and in an impreſſion of Field's Bible, worked off under the Uſurpation, though not printed till 1660, the word *ye* was ſubſtituted for *we*, in Acts, ch. vi. ver. 3.

† As by Cecil, Leiceſter, Walſingham, Sir Francis Knollis, &c.

eſtabliſhment,

eſtabliſhment *, as conceived to be merely doctrinal; and unconnected with the notions of external diſcipline, which ſome, in oppoſition to the unvaried ſentiments and inſtitutions of the Church in preceding times, began to entertain. On the other hand, it will not be thought extraordinary, that, when ſpeculative fancies began to ſwell into miſchievous ſchemes, and their advocates appeared to brood, with ſullen diſcontent, over projects of religious and political hoſtility, theſe principles ſhould be more accurately examined; and the enlightened members of our Church more loudly contend for the Arminian doctrines †, in thoſe points wherein they were rationally

* Hume repreſents above 500 Clergymen to have ſubſcribed to a book of diſcipline in 1584. Few of the reſpectable Clergy could have wiſhed to hatch the Preſbyterian government under the wings of epiſcopacy, as Heylin expreſſes himſelf. See Hume, note R. to Vol. V. 8vo. Neal's Hiſt. Vol. I. p. 482; Dawes' and Strype's Life of Whitgift.

† The Calvinian ſentiments ſpread conſiderably among the Clergy in the reign of Elizabeth, though but with partial effect, as appears from the public profeſſions of faith; from the delay in the upper Houſe of Convocation in ratifying Nowell's Catechiſm; from the ſuppreſſion of the Lambeth Articles, and the preaching of Baroe, Harſnet, and others. See Articles, Homilies, &c; Preface to Nowell's Catechiſm; Baroe Prælect. in Gen. xx. ver. 3. & Prælect. 30; Harſnet's Sermon, in Ezek. ch. iii. ver. 11; and notes to ſixth Sermon. On the acceſſion of James the Firſt, the Puritans conceived great expectations, and Dr. Reynolds appeared in his fur gown at the Hampton-Court conference;

rationally oppoſed to the harſh and rigorous principles of Calviniſm; which were relinquiſhed by the Clergy in proportion as they were canvaſſed; and retained an influence chiefly on thoſe, whoſe gloomy and fanatic temper was favourable to their operation; and who appeared to burn with much of that ſpirit which "luſteth to envy."

Neither is it difficult to underſtand, wherefore it happened, that, as the political bias verged towards the depreſſed adherents of the Romiſh cauſe, with deſign to counteract the

rence; but though the King retained, perhaps, ſome prejudices in favour of the ſpeculative doctrines (however averſe to the diſcipline) of the Calviniſts, he was not, probably, at the commencement of his reign, very firmly attached to the doctrine of predeſtination, or Dr. Bancroft, who was little diſpoſed to thwart a ſovereign, whom he proteſted to have been unparalleled from the time of Chriſt, would not at the Conference have called it "a deſperate doctrine." The vehement zeal, which the King diſplayed againſt Vorſtius, was founded on abhorrence of the blaſphemous opinions which he had publiſhed, and on political conſiderations. The Engliſh Divines, who, at the Synod of Dort, were diſtinguiſhed for their moderation, rejected the Supralapſarian doctrines; though they adhered to the opinions of St. Auſtin. Heylin ſays, that they were inſtructed not to oppoſe the doctrine of univerſal redemption; and Neal admits, that they did not touch upon the received limitations, which reſtrict the paſſages relating to Chriſt's dying for the whole world, to the elect. The decrees of the Synod obtained but little reſpect in England, where the Arminian doctrines were ſoon eſpouſed by the King, and the greateſt part of the Clergy. Heylin's Introduct. to the Life of Laud, Moſheim, &c.

exertions

exertions of the riſing ſect; * the leading characters of our Church, who endeavoured to render its ſervice more venerable and impreſſive by a revival of its ancient ſplendour, ſhould be ſubjected to the imputation of wiſhing to return into the polluted boſom of Rome; an imputation, which, however merited by individuals, and however it might animate the hopes of the ever-ſanguine Romaniſts, was frequently unjuſt in its application †.

The

* James the Firſt has been repreſented to have inclined to popery towards the end of his reign; and though it is not likely that he would have been diſpoſed to reſign the ſupremacy, he appears to have conſidered ſome grounds of diſtinction between the two Churches as leſs conſiderable than they really were. Charles the Firſt diſclaimed, on the ſcaffold, any diſpoſition to that religion; his Queen, however, and ſome of the Court, appear to have entertained the wiſh for a re-union with the Roman Church. In both theſe reigns ſtrong ſuſpicions operated to the prejudice of the Court, and influenced ſome to change the profeſſion of their faith. See Birch's Hiſt. View of the Negotiations between the Church of England, France, and Bruſſels, publiſhed in 1745; Winwood's Memoirs; Tyndal's Continuation of Rapin, Vol. II. c. 18; Harris's Hiſtorical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of James I. Berington's Memoirs of Panzani. Charles II. in his laſt illneſs, received the ſacrament from Romiſh Prieſts; and papers were found, after his death, written with his own hand, in favour of the Romiſh Communion. See Hume.

† Laud had been twice offered a Cardinal's hat; but whatever propenſity he diſplayed towards ſuperſtitious ceremonies, he proteſted, at the hour and inſtant of his death, that he never endeavoured the ſubverſion of law or religion: and we know that

The general body of the Clergy does not at any time appear to have declined from the profeſſion of faith to which it had ſubſcribed; though every ſtep, which retreated from the popular ſtandard, was repreſented as a deſertion to the tents of the adverſe power.

The diſpoſition to ſoften differences not eſſential, and to promote union with other Churches, where no momentous doctrines muſt be ſacrificed, has indeed been ever a genuine demonſtration of that Chriſtian ſpirit which pervades the councils of our Church. If it hath been ſometimes accuſed of making too large conceſſions, with deſign to conciliate; it hath not been proved that it has ever been ſo faſcinated with the love of peace, as to forget the claims of truth *. It hath not fallen

that he brought back Chillingworth to the Church of England. Ruſhworth, Vol. III. p. 132; Whitlock, p. 97; Heylin, p. ii. c. 4.

* No ſpecific conditions ſeem ever to have been arranged by our Church, for an union with that of Rome. Archbiſhop Wake's project, in later times, for an union between the Engliſh and Gallican Churches, though ſtated in the Confeſſional to have been framed with conceſſions in favour of the groſſeſt ſuperſtition and idolatry; has been fully ſhewn, by the tranſlator of Moſheim, from the original correſpondence of the Archbiſhop, not to have ſacrificed any one point of the doctrine and diſcipline of the Church of England; and it appears that the deſire of union with the Church of Rome, expreſſed on that occaſion, was founded on the hopes of a conſiderable reformation in

fallen back into the ſhade of ſuperſtition, nor been hurried beyond the boundaries erected for the preſervation of important principles.

When conteſts and ambitious diſſenſion predominate in ſociety, errors of opinion are generated with prolific variety. The vigour of invention is exerted to diſcover principles that may countenance prevailing deſigns, and vindicate corrupt conduct. Our Church, however, continued to preſerve its faith, undebaſed by the numerous follies diſſeminated by the increaſing ſpirit of diſloyalty.

When rebellion had accompliſhed its purpoſe, and uſurpation was ſeated on the throne; when fanaticiſm and hypocriſy pervaded every civil and eccleſiaſtical department; when the firſt principles of ſociety were violated *, and that extravagance, which was

in that Church, and an expectation that its moſt abſurd doctrines would fall to the ground, if they could be deprived of their great ſupport, the Papal authority; the deſtruction of which authority was the very baſis of the correſpondence. See Appendix III. to laſt volume of Moſheim, and Biograph. Britan. article Wake.

* Some idea of the times may be formed from an act paſſed in 1650, by which it is provided, that if any perſon ſhall profeſs "that the acts of adultery, drunkenneſs, ſwearing, and the like open wickedneſs are in their own nature as holy and righteous as the duties of prayer, preaching, or giving thanks to God; or if any perſon ſhall avowedly profeſs that happineſs conſiſts

was the criterion of ſanctity, daily brought forth its new ſects *, the ſcattered miniſters of our Church, though they beheld its ſtructure levelled, together with the broken pillars of the ſtate, "even to the ground," collected, in deprivation and retirement, their faithful congregations; kept alive the flame of true religion, and preſerved the uncorrupted ſincerity of its faith and worſhip †, till it pleaſed God, after trial of their faith in affliction, to raiſe them again to exaltation.

So alſo, when the diſguſt, which had been excited by ſtrained and affected piety, terminated in levity and diſregard to religion, the members of our Church, by their example and writings, ſupported its cauſe; repelled, with admirable temper and power of reaſoning, the efforts of profane ridicule and

conſiſts in the commiſſion of ſuch crimes, and that there is no ſuch thing as unrighteouſneſs or ſin, independent of conſcience and opinion; and if any perſon ſhall be convicted of maintaining ſuch frightful doctrine, he ſhall ſuffer ſix months impriſonment for the firſt, and exile for the ſecond offence." Collier's Eccleſ. Hiſt. p. ii. b. 9.

* At that time, ſays Nichol, it was a moſt ſignal mark of a ſaint to be the author of ſome monſtrous opinion, p. 59; the preachers prayed for and againſt one another. See Walton, in his Life of King; Edwards Gangræna, Epiſt. Dedicat. This writer reckons up 176 heretical and blaſphemous opinions maintained in the courſe of four years.

† As did Bull, Jeremy Taylor, Sanderſon, &c.

licentious

licentious infidelity, and maintained the eternal laws of moral and religious obligation, againſt the ſubtle miſrepreſentations with which captivating genius and perverted learning laboured to countenance the corruption of a libertine age *. Afterwards, when the deluſions of returning popery began to allure its fickle converts, and to intrance them to a forgetfulneſs of the inſtructions of wiſdom, the advocates of our eſtabliſhment animated attention to a review of the whole ſubject of difference ſubſiſting between the two Churches; in which they diſplayed an accuracy of diſtinction, that hath been ſeldom equalled; and a force of illuſtration, that hath never been ſurpaſſed. By their induſtry were the arts of inſidious and perſuaſive eloquence again defeated; many diſſenters brought over to a Church thus bearing diſtinguiſhed teſtimony to truth; and the Pro-

* Dr. Seth Ward, Teniſon, Dr. Henry More, Cudworth, Cumberland, and others, ſucceſsfully oppoſed the miſchievous principles of Hobbes. Burnet awakened and convinced the Earl of Rocheſter, with a piety and force of argument that muſt affect every mind; Berkley and Wotton expoſed the tendency of Shafteſbury's writings; and Clarke pointed out the arts and falſehood of Toland and Collins. See Wood and Leland.

teſtant cauſe confirmed with irreſiſtible weight of evidence *.

In later times, the ſtores of learning have been brought forward, in the ſervice of Chriſtianity, with continued induſtry, by the writers of our Church; and the general truth and ſincerity of our faith ſo fully demonſtrated, in oppoſition to every riſing hereſy, that thoſe who would vindicate its claim to regard, have little to do but to profit by their labours, and draw forth the deductions of their reſearch.

If we advert to the ſecond favourable point of view, in which our Church may be conſidered, we ſhall find abundant reaſon to admire that temperate ſpirit, which hath uniformly guided it in a courſe of moderation; and gradually ſeparated the ſting and rancour of intolerance from the animation of religious zeal.

From the firſt moment of the exertion of that reaſon, of which the Reformation aſ-

* See Preſervative againſt Popery, containing a ſelection of many admirable Diſcourſes, by the moſt eminent Divines of the reign of James II. among which are productions under the diſtinguiſhed names of Burnet, Cave, Hickes, Patrick, Sherlock, Grove, Tillotſon, Stillingfleet, Kidder, Wake, Whitby, &c.

ſerted

ſerted the rights, our Church diſclaimed the pretenſions to infallibility; and the preſumption of an excluſive title to ſalvation, which had characterized the Roman faith; and produced that temper of bigotry and perſecution, which hath diſgraced its profeſſors in every age. It dealt out no anathema againſt other congregations, though it proclaimed the conditions of the Evangelical Covenant, and reprobated the notion of indifference as to the choice of faith *. Extending the folds of an ample charity, it embraced, with the affection of common intereſts and hopes, all who were inclined to profit by ſuch light and aſſiſtance as ſhould be afforded. It rejected

* The 18th Article condemns the preſumptuous fancy, that ſalvation is to be obtained by or in virtue of every law or ſect; maintaining, nearly in the language of Scripture, that there is no other name but that of Jeſus Chriſt whereby men muſt be ſaved; by which is not aſſerted, as Mr. Hume ſtates, that no Heathen, how virtuous ſoever, can eſcape an endleſs ſtate of miſery, but only that Chriſt is the ſole cauſe of ſalvation, and that thoſe to whom the Goſpel is propoſed can have no ground of confidence but by accepting its conditions. See Acts, ch. iv. ver. 12. Mark, ch. xvi. ver. 16. John, ch. xiv. ver. 6. 1 John, ch. v. ver. 11, 12. Thoſe who have not heard of the Goſpel, our Church conſiders as out of the covenant of grace, but not therefore deſtined to condemnation; aware of the texts in Rom. ch. ii. ver. 12—14, 15. ch. x. ver. 14. Mr. Gibbon, with ſagacity equal to that of Mr. Hume, diſcovers an uncharitable ſpirit in the 8th Article, if there be not a typographical error. See Hume, ch. xxxv. Ann. 1551; Gibbon, ch. xv. note 7; Cranmer's Book againſt Gardiner, fol. 372.

not from its communion even thoſe, whoſe errors it had abjured; departing from their faith, only as that faith had receded from the ſtandard of its fidelity; and holding forth the right hand of fellowſhip to all who profeſſed the eſſential doctrines of revelation *; with a moderation, the conciliatory tendency of which, awakened the ſolicitude of its enemies, who inſidiouſly laboured to defeat its intention, and to counteract its influence †.

If, after maintaining the ſufficiency of the Scriptures, and the deciſions of the primitive ages, our Church for ſome time impoſed the doctrines of human invention; if, after aſſerting the rights of a conſcientious freedom of judgment, it conſtrained the exertions of the mind,—not by a juſtifiable rejection from offices of inſtruction and confidence, but by meaſures of obtruſive, and even ſanguinary compulſion, it was in rare and ſo-

* The Romaniſts, even in the perſons of ambaſſadors from foreign countries, continued to reſort to our Churches for many years, as Lord Chief Juſtice Coke hath informed us; ſo alſo did the Calviniſts. The Pope, by an injunction in 1569, directed the Romaniſts to withdraw. Heylin ſtates, that the Puritans ſet the example. Hiſt. Preſbyt. l. vi. p. 258; Andrews, Tortura Torti.

† The policy of Rome did not deem it advantageous to the Roman cauſe, that any toleration or indulgence ſhould be granted.

litary

litary inſtances, ere its awakened ſpirit had thrown off every prejudice of a corrupt faith; ere its ſecurity reſted on a ſettled foundation, and amidſt the ſtruggles of numerous and active enemies, who laboured with unremitted endeavours to effect its deſtruction.

The few deeds of cruelty which ſtain its annals, it deplores with one common ſentiment; lamenting the errors of lingering bigotry *, the prejudice, which impeded the operation of principles, gradually diſcloſed and perfected.

To the reſolute temper of a vigorous, and ſometimes rigid government, muſt be aſcribed the laws which operated in ſucceſſive reigns † with

* The conduct even of Cranmer, in the affairs of Lambert and Joan Bocher, has imprinted a deep ſpot on his memory.

† Joan Bocher, and a Dutchman, were burnt in Edward's days. Two Anabaptiſts were executed, in the reign of Elizabeth, on the ſcore of religion; many more were impriſoned, haraſſed, and baniſhed, but chiefly on the charge or ſuſpicion of treaſon. The general proceedings of the High Commiſſion Court, and the oath, *ex officio*, were very arbitrary. Elizabeth's proceedings were grounded, however, on two unexceptionable principles: the firſt, that conſcience ought not to be controlled, but by the force of truth, and the aid of time and inſtruction; and that cauſes of conſcience, when they exceed their bounds, and grow to be matters of faction, loſe their nature; and that ſovereign princes ought diſtinctly to puniſh their practices and contempt, though coloured with the pretence of reaſon and religion. She was reluctantly led to depart from mild meaſures. See Walſingham's Letters, concerning the Queen's proceed-

 ings;

with penal ſeverity againſt the aſſailants of its conſtitution; who, maſking malicious deſigns under the pretence of conſcience, or framing political ſchemes with religious enthuſiaſm, conſpired to the ſubverſion as well of the civil, as of the eccleſiaſtical departments.

For the capricious and indiſcriminate acts of tyranny in the reign of Henry *, and for ſome tranſient traces of vindictive perſecution in ſubſequent times, we have no apology to offer; as they muſt be imputed to that miſtaken zeal for religion, which blindly unſheaths the ſword of violence to enforce its precarious dictates; which in former ages hath conſecrated the banners of cruelty; and diſplayed the croſs of Chriſt, but to ſpread abroad the horrors of devaſtation and blood. Thoſe, however, who have reflected on the dangerous activity of that unſubdued ſpirit

ings; Burnet, Vol. III. p. 419; and Neal, Vol. I. p. 598; Dodd's Chriſtian Hiſt. In the reign of James I. two Arians were burnt, and a phrenzied man, who called himſelf the Holy Ghoſt. James, however, in general, combated with argument. He eſtabliſhed a college at Chelſea, compoſed of 20 perſons, who were to be employed in the ſyſtematical refutation of Papiſts and Puritans. Moderate Romaniſts now admit, that the conduct of their anceſtors provoked the ſeverities of thoſe reigns.

* Under the operation of the ſtatute of the Six Articles, Papiſts and Proteſtants were conveyed to execution on the ſame hurdle.

which

which animated the cauſe of the depreſſed party in the reign of Elizabeth * and James; which was inſtigated by the Roman pontiff, to whom it continued to aſſign a temporal and univerſal ſceptre, and a depoſing authority †; which leagued with the formidable and threatening enemies of the country at critical and alarming moments; which every where cheriſhed a ſuſpected flame, and betrayed the materials of dangerous preparation, will not diſpute the neceſſity of ſome

* The Romaniſts deſigned to ſubvert the conſtitution in State as well as Church; to eſtabliſh the inquiſition under a leſs odious name; to depoſe the Queen; to new-model the Parliament, with a mixture of eccleſiaſtics; and alſo to change the mode of trial by juries; "twelve ſilly men," as they were called. See Parſons' Memorial, with Gee's notes, p. i. b. iii. ch. 4; Foulis's Hiſtory of Treaſon; Dodd's Church Hiſtory.

† See Jewell's View of a Seditious Bull; Burleigh's Tracts, p. 14; Plowden's Church and State, b. i. ch. 9. b. ii. ch. 7; Conſpiracy for pretended Reformation, &c. It is a curious circumſtance, that an anſwer to Sir Henry Saville's tranſlation of King James's Apology for the Oath of Allegiance, which was made by command of the Conclave by Franciſco Suarez, and entitled Defenſio Fidei Catholicæ, was interlined by the Inquiſition at Rome with the doctrine of depoſing and of killing princes; though deteſted by the writer of the Anſwer. See Dr. King's Letter to Walker, prefixed to Hooker's Eccleſiaſtical Polity. The proceedings of the Jeſuits to re-eſtabliſh Popery, exhibit a moſt remarkable continuance of miſchievous deſigns providentially defeated. The ſeminaries at Rome, Rheims, Valladolid, Saville, St. Omer's, and Douay, countenanced by the reſentment of Philip and the Pope, were ſchools of men inſtructed to avail themſelves of every paſſion and occaſion.

extraordinary ſeverities for the ſecurity of the kingdom.

Thoſe, likewiſe, on the other hand, who have conſidered the miſchievous and offenſive conduct * of the oppoſite party, which fanned every ſpark of diſcontent, and encouraged every breeze of diſaffection; which eſtabliſhed its nurſeries of diſſenſion in every part, and inflamed them with the fanatic notion of their deſtination to eſtabliſh a pattern of imaginary perfection of civil and religious diſcipline †; thoſe who review the character of ſuch times, cannot be ſurpriſed at diſcovering ſome acts of rigour in the adminiſtration of the ſecular

* Scurrilities and inſults were daily iſſued from the preſs and the pulpit, even in the time of Elizabeth. See Martin Mar-Prelate; More Work for the Cooper; Theſes Martinianæ, and other ſeditious and ſchiſmatical traſh. Theſe were anſwered in the ſame ſtyle of low pleaſantry: as by Paſquil's Apology, a Counter Cuff given to Martin, a Fig for my Godſon, &c. Weekly meetings were eſtabliſhed for conſultation by the Puritans, and a conſiſtory ſet up in London. Theſe took upon them to appoint faſts; and they avowed the deſign of introducing the diſcipline. Their proceedings were ſo ſeditious, that Leiceſter and Walſingham deſerted them; and Heylin ſtates, that at a meeting at Cambridge, at which Cartwright and Perkins were preſent, they went ſo far as to take into conſideration how the archbiſhops, biſhops, and other dignitaries, with their appendages, ſhould be provided for when ejected from their preferment.

† The enthuſiaſtic fancies of election, and the perverted declarations of promiſes of Scripture, were induſtriouſly employed to kindle a ſpirit of enterprize among the people.

power:

power: or cannot at leaſt diſpute, that they reſulted from political apprehenſion; and not from the ſuggeſtion of the Church, which, where its voice was reſpected, had betrayed no intemperance of ſpirit; had ſhewn no wiſh to retaliate the cruelties of Mary's reign *; and by its mild and conciliatory temper had ſometimes gained its adverſaries to reverence its deciſions; and pleaded, with effectual ſupplication, for the condemned †.

By the diſcreet and temperate meaſures of the Reformers, perſuading and exhorting men to a conſideration of the evidence of truth, was the cauſe of reformation advanced; and not by violence or perſecution. While the Scriptures were commended, the ſpirit which they breathe was inſenſibly adopted; and if we reflect on the operation of human paſſions, and conſider how invariably their ſuggeſtions mingle with the beſt deſigns, we ſhall find ſubject of admiration, that the cauſe of religion could, with ſo few exceptions, be

* Even Bonner eſcaped, though there were grounds for proceeding againſt him, for having exceeded the ſanguinary commiſſions which he had received.

† See the accounts of Whitgift's conduct towards Snape, Cartwright, and Udal; ſee alſo his Letter to Beza; likewiſe the Relation of Hooker's behaviour to Travers; Preface to Eccleſiaſtical Polity, &c.

allowed

allowed to prevail by its own force; and that amidſt anxious ſolicitude, and conflicting intereſts and difficulties, it ſhould eſtabliſh its decrees with ſo little violence.

Look we back to the vaſt ſtructure of ſuperſtition which had been raiſed by the accumulations of ſucceſſive ages; behold it darkening the land by its ſhadow; reverenced by the multitude, and defended by a zealous and powerful combination of the elevated members of ſociety; ſee it collapſe with ſudden fall; without injury to the country; without even involving its corrupt ſupporters in its ruin, any farther than as their intereſts were immediately implicated and entwined with the departments which were removed, and we ſhall have cauſe to venerate the powerful operation of truth, which could thus break up and deſtroy a fabrick ſo ſtupendous.

It has been often urged as a want of moderation in our Church, that it did not concede a little to the prejudices of thoſe "weak "brethren," who firſt ſeparated from its communion on ſome inconſiderable objections to the rites and veſtments of its reformed ſervice. If, however, we reflect how few and ſimple were the particulars of external obſervance

ſervance which were inſiſted on; how juſtifiable they were from ancient precedent and general approbation; and how neceſſary it was that inward and ſpiritual impreſſions ſhould be ſignified by exterior tokens of indication and reverence, we ſhall be inclined to think that the temper, which was offended at the decent and expreſſive ceremonial that was retained, muſt have been blinded by indiſcriminate zeal, and ſolicitous to diſcover blemiſhes*; and that as the queſtion of the right of the Church to direct in concerns of external arrangement and order was involved in the diſpute, we ſhould not condemn the firmneſs which oppoſed itſelf to the reſtleſs ſpirit of innovation. At

* Walſingham did offer to procure an indulgence for the Puritans, as to the ſurplice, kneeling at the ſacrament, and the croſs in baptiſm. They anſwered, That not an hoof ſhould be left behind. Lord Burleigh directed ſome of the diſcontented party to prepare a liturgy: one claſs accordingly deviſed a plan upon the Geneva ſyſtem, to which ſix hundred objections were made by a ſecond claſs; and the alterations were diſapproved by a third, againſt whoſe ideas a fourth claſs offered their objections; when the prudent Stateſman diſmiſſed them all, aſſuring them, that, when they did agree in any liturgy univerſally acceptable, he would aſſiſt them. See Heylin's Hiſtory of Preſbyterians, l. vii. fol. 506. The author of the Confeſſional admits, that ſome perſons ſeparated from our Church, whoſe pride, paſſion, and ſelf-conceit, knew no bounds; and whom, probably, the moſt reaſonable forms would not have retained. See alſo Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 497; by which it appears, how difficult it would have been to ſatisfy the moſt moderate Nonconformiſts.

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the ſame time we cannot but with ſorrow reflect that a ſeparation, originating in ſuch ſlight cauſes, ſhould, with reſpect to many, have widened with increaſing departure, into a ſchiſm in great and fundamental doctrines.

If we proſecute the enquiry, we ſhall find, that, when with the moſt fatal exceſſes "religion was turned into rebellion, and faith "into faction," the ſincere ſervants of Chriſt, who ſcarcely breathed under the terror and oppreſſive ſway of thoſe who had clamoured for toleration *, nouriſhed no vindictive hatred againſt their oppreſſors; though they beheld, amidſt ſcenes of terror and deſtruction, their ſacred edifices profaned and defaced, and the rights and offices of their appointed ſtations invaded and ſpoiled †.

When

* Hume ſtates the Independents to have been the firſt ſect which, during its proſperity and adverſity, always adopted the principles of toleration. Popery and Prelacy, however, he allows, were by them treated with rigour; and they deemed the doctrine of fate eſſential to all religion. Hume, ch. 57. The Preſbyterians called toleration an hideous monſter; the great Diana of the Independents; and had no wiſh to encourage it. In the treaty of the Iſle of Wight, they refuſed to allow to Charles the uſe of the Common Prayer-Book in his own family. In a ſtate of ſubjection they pleaded for toleration, as all dependent ſects do, but forgot it when in power.

† From 1641 to 1647, 115 miniſters were deprived in London, excluſive of St. Paul's and Weſtminſter. More were deprived

When the unſettled and incoherent frame, which had been upheld by the vigour of a ſingle arm, fell to pieces; and the Church, on the return of exiled monarchy, was raiſed from the duſt, it was ſtained with no cruelty towards its forgiven enemies. The decree of juſtice diſpoſſeſſed of the ſeats which they had ſeized, thoſe perſons only who had occupied them to the prejudice of the rightful claimants; or who refuſed conformity to the appointed ordinances of the Church *, and declarations of allegiance to the civil government.

If, when ſchemes of comprehenſion were projected, the advocates of the eſtabliſhment were very vehemently charged with inflexibility in refuſing to concede any change; it ſhould be remembered, that little hope could be entertained of agreement with men who perſiſted in a ſeparation, condemned by all diſintereſted and impartial obſervers †; who pro-

prived in the ſpace of three years, than in the reign of Mary. The benefices were filled with baſe and ſubſervient miniſters. See Walker's Attempt towards recovering an Account of the Sufferings of the Clergy.

* See Statute of Uniformity, 13 & 14 Car. II. c. 4. Above 2000 loſt their preferment, and muſt be allowed the credit of a ſincerity which deſerved conſideration.

† As by Calvin, Beza, &c. See alſo Monſ. le Moyne's, Monſ. de l'Angle's, and Monſ. Claude's Letters, in Collier, Vol. II. p. ii. b. ix.

poſed,

poſed, as the conditions of union, a modification of the epiſcopal form of government in accommodation to the Preſbyterian model; the abolition of unperverted ceremonies and diſtinctive veſtments; and the adoption of a new liturgy, drawn up by a ſingle hand unpractiſed in the forms of antiquity *. The ſevere prohibitions, which were for a time enacted againſt ſeditious conventicles, eſtabliſhed under pretence of the exerciſe of religion, were framed in diſcouragement of that rebellious ſpirit which continued occaſionally to diſplay its unextinguiſhed flames †, and were ſeldom enforced except where the ſafety of the State was concerned. The Sovereign, who had been himſelf oppreſſed, was taught by the charitable inſtructions of our Church, as well as by the voice of ſectaries ‡, how odious, both to God and man, an oppreſſor muſt be; and in his

* See the Account of the Proceedings at the Savoy Conference.

† As by the riſing of the fifth monarchy men, and the conſpiracy of the Rump Parliament in 1663, the Rye-Houſe Plot, &c. See Hiſt. of Plot Inform. p. 136; Titles of London Caſes; Grove's Perſuaſive, &c.

‡ See the manly Preface to Barclay's Apology. The Quakers ſuffered in this reign; but it was chiefly for refuſing to pay tithes, and take the oath required by the law. As their refuſal ſeems to have been dictated by religious ſcruples, we may regret the operation of the law, and approve of the expedients adopted for their relief.

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reign the only remaining decree of perſecution which diſgraced its laws was repealed *.

From this period, though oppoſite intereſts have combined in unnatural union, and perſiſted with unaltered enmity againſt the Church, it hath encouraged an increaſing ſpirit of moderation and indulgence; and reſted, as to human protection, for ſecurity only on its legal and conſtitutional barriers, and on the conviction excited by the admirable vindications of its cauſe.

The moderation and tolerant ſpirit of our Church having been ſufficiently ſhewn, we ſhall proceed to demonſtrate that it has advanced the eſſential intereſts of the country; as well by conſpiring with the deſigns of civil liberty, as by promoting moral and religious virtue.

The deliverance from the Papal ſupremacy, was, as we have ſeen, an emancipation

* By virtue of the Statute 29 Car. II. c. 9. the Writ de Hæretico comburendo was aboliſhed; "the laſt badge of perſecution in the Engliſh law," ſays Blackſtone, b. iv. ch. 4. An heretic is ſtill liable to be impriſoned, by the writ de Excommunicato Capiendo, till he make ſatisfaction to the Church, which properly foregoes the power, from a conviction that ſpeculative errors, which countenance no practical evil, ſhould be controlled by force of argument, and not by impriſonment and bonds; and that the cauſe of truth can be little promoted by the extortion of official fees.

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from civil, as well as from ſpiritual tyranny; and every apprehenſion of the return of the Romiſh faith, has been connected in calm and conſiderable reflection, as well as in popular fears, with the apprehenſion of the return of arbitrary power. Thoſe who vindicated the rejection of the Papal uſurpation, opened the great principles of our conſtitutional ſecurity; and every ſtruggle for a removal of reſtrictions on the conſcience, has facilitated the exertions of political wiſdom. Religious and civil liberty flouriſh under the ſame patronage, and expand by the ſame favour. From the beginning of the Reformation, till its completion in the reign of Elizabeth, the advocates of the one were the advocates of the other; and it was only when the pretence of liberty was made "a cloak of maliciouſneſs," that the members of our Church were placed in oppoſition to thoſe who profeſſed a wiſh to advance the cauſe of general ſecurity; and whoſe meaſures, however they might eventually contribute to the attainment of equitable proviſions, were certainly intemperate in their execution, and extremely deſtructive in their immediate operation and tendencies.

In the firſt reigns which ſucceeded the aſſignment of the ſupremacy to the ſovereign power,

power, the pretenſions of the prerogative were domineering, and impatient of control. The flattery, however, which inſcribed the diadem with a ſacred and indefeaſible title, and chained the ſubject in ſlaviſh and unreſiſting ſubmiſſion to the throne, originated not with the reformed Clergy; though it continued to be ſupported by them in conformity with a prevailing perſuaſion, and in oppoſition to the wild enthuſiaſm of thoſe who ſought rudely to tear away every ancient ſanction of authority; and whatever may have been the ſervile language of individuals who had flouriſhed under Royal favour; or the intemperate zeal of loyalty, heightened by the ſenſe of danger, and by generous attachment to a declining cauſe *, it does not appear that the miniſters

* The Homilies breathed the ſpirit of the time in which they appeared; and the doctrine of unqualified ſubmiſſion was as much the doctrine of the nobility and Parliament as of the clergy. In the reign of Elizabeth, Gifford, a clergyman, was degraded for preaching a limited obedience. In the reign of James, there was a Biſhop Andrews at Court as well as a Biſhop Neile; though certainly the clergy in that reign puſhed the doctrine of ſubmiſſion much too far; and farther indeed than the King himſelf approved, when it interfered with his politics; as on the occaſion of his aſſiſting the Hollanders againſt Spain. See Biograph. Britan. art. Abbott. Their tone however was higheſt when the oppoſite principles prevailed to the moſt extravagant extent; and it was increaſed in 1640, by loyal apprehenſions for a Sovereign harſhly treated and ſorely

miniſters of our Church have been at any time inſenſible to the claims, or unfriendly to the temperate exertions of liberty: on the contrary, they have in ſignal inſtances been its diſtinguiſhed favourers. They awakened the ſpirit which accompliſhed that revolution, to which the friends of freedom look with fondeſt veneration *, as to the renovated baſis of the conſtitution; and on many occaſions they have aſſiſted in the ſtruggles, and gloried in the triumphs, of patriotiſm.

If, in general, they have been found to plead for eſtabliſhed powers, and ſought to moderate the exceſſes of popular innovation; if they have laboured to implant the principle of a conſcientious obedience on the ground of religious duty, and have uniformly oppoſed thoſe wild and pernicious notions

preſſed. When the ſad neceſſity exiſted, a principle of becoming reſiſtance was to be found among the clergy. The objectionable doctrine died away with the Nonjurors, except when the voice of party occaſionally revived it.

* The conduct of the clergy, at the period of the Revolution, has been often celebrated; eſpecially with reſpect to the proceedings of the Univerſities, Biſhop Compton, the archbiſhops and ſix biſhops; the refuſal to read the King's inſidious declaration, and the general oppoſition to the eccleſiaſtical commiſſion: for which the whole body received the thanks of Parliament. See Journals of Houſe of Commons in 1686; Biſhop of London's Sermons, Vol. II. Sermon VII. &c.

which

which unſettle ſtates, it is becauſe they have conſulted the real intereſts of ſociety.

Converſant with the examples of former times, and the profound reaſonings of learned writers, and convinced of the ſolidity of thoſe principles which are founded on conſideration of the permanent paſſions of men, they liſten not to theories which are framed without reſpect to the reſtrictions which long experience hath commended; they conſent not to ſacrifice certain bleſſings for contingent advantage; they embark not on tempeſtuous ſeas for precarious profit. Any erroneous ſentiments which they may have occaſionally maintained on ſubjects of warm diſcuſſion, and affecting various intereſts, have been exaggerated, as the more exceptionable from men from whom reaſonable councils are generally expected, and generally heard; have left a ſtrong impreſſion; and often caſt an undeſerved diſcredit on the body of a profeſſion, marked out by a diſtinct character, and viewed under the colourings of a tranſmitted fame from age to age. But if we judge of their general principles as collected from the writings of acknowledged authority, they will be found to expreſs a juſt moderation on ſubjects of public intereſt; to re-

preſent, in conſiſtency with the voice of revelation, the general good to be the object and end of all government; and to ſuppoſe authority, as ratified by that ſanction, and obedience commanded on that conſideration.

The true intereſts of the country have been effectually advanced by the voice of religion, as conſpiring with the temperate exertions of freedom; and it will appear alſo unqueſtionable to every candid and impartial enquirer, that the eſſential welfare of the kingdom has been, in every period, conſiderably promoted by its reformed preachers; whoſe object has ever been to regulate the paſſions by the guidance of the underſtanding, which they have ſought to enlighten. The firſt precepts conveyed by the miniſters of reſtored Chriſtianity, taught the people no longer to confide in the mechanical appointments which had been ſubſtituted for the vital works of Chriſtianity, by thoſe who had availed themſelves of religious affections to impreſs the mind with prejudicial images *. They inſtructed them to abide by the laws of Chriſt's Teſtament, and informed them that they were "not redeemed

* See the injunctions of Henry in 1536; of Edward in 1547; of Elizabeth in 1551, compared with that of Mary in 1554.

"with

" with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold;
" from their vain converſation, as received by
" tradition from their fathers; but with the
" precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb with-
" out blemiſh and without ſpot." Thus were the people led to abhor their ancient ſuperſtition * of ceremonious offices, of venal indulgence † and numerated ſervices, and to labour for the cultivation of a juſt faith, demonſtrated by the expreſſion of practical righteouſneſs ‡. The ſame uſeful inſtruction hath uniformly continued to promote a ſound and unchanging morality, eſtabliſhed on revealed principles; hath inſtilled its early leſſons into the youth whoſe education it ſuperintends, and infuſed its unceaſing maxims through every claſs and department of ſociety.

It comporteth not with that ſpirit of humility, which adorns the profeſſion of the Chriſtian ſervice, to diſplay its pretenſions to the regard of men, any farther than is neceſ-

* Jam primum ſenio docilis tua tempora Roma
Erubuit, pudet exacti temporis, odit
Præteritos fœdis cum religionibus annos.

† Cœlum venale deuſque.

‡ ——— Religionem
Quæ filo inſertis numerat ſua murmura Bacchis.
MANTUAN.

ſary to illuſtrate the tendency of the principles which we ſeek to commend; but it were a derogation from the cauſe we plead, and an omiſſion injurious to the claims of diſtinguiſhed virtue, to withhold a teſtimony of praiſe from thoſe eminent men, who have ſtreamed in the radiance of a long ſucceſſion, the examples and ornaments of our Church. Where ſo many have contributed to the advancement of the work that has engaged our attention, we have not ſelected individuals for partial celebration; though many names, dear to remembrance, may have ſeemed to challenge peculiar attention. The principles eſtabliſhed in our Church are accepted on the ground of their own excellency, and require not the ſanction of authority. They were commended, without aſſumption of perſonal aſcendency, by thoſe who were willing that their reputation ſhould fade in the tranſcendency of Chriſt's glory, and their inſtructions reſolve themſelves into his laws. Yet from the days of thoſe, "by whom the Lord wrought great power at the beginning," when the riſing cauſe derived a luſtre from the candid and diſintereſted virtues of Cranmer, the unſhaken firmneſs and enlightened mind of Ridley, the earneſt zeal of repentant

Latimer,

Latimer, how many have flouriſhed in the lineage of the ſacred order, whoſe memorial might be produced with impreſſive effect! Since where were any among thoſe "who have left a name behind them, that their praiſes might be reported," more juſtly famous as "leaders of the people by their knowledge of learning meet for their direction," "eloquent in their inſtructions?" Where were any more "peaceable in their habitations," "more honoured as the glory of their times," "giving counſel by their underſtanding, and declaring prophecies;" "merciful men, whoſe righteouſneſs hath not been forgotten;" foremoſt in the ranks of literature; recorded in every monument of benevolence; eminent in the circles of domeſtic virtue *.

May thoſe who ſucceed in their miniſtry walk in their footſteps, and emulate the excellency of their lives; may "the people tell alſo of their wiſdom, and the congregation ſhew forth their praiſe:" may the Almighty, with protecting care of his Church, "give them wiſdom in their heart to guide his people in righteouſneſs, that their good things be not aboliſhed, and that their glory may endure for ever †."

* Ecclus. ch. xliv. † Ecclus. ch. xlv. ver. 26.

SERMON VIII.

EPHES. iv. 3.

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

ON a contemplation of the full ſcope, and perfect deſign of the Goſpel, it appears to be intended for the promotion of a faith in Chriſt, that may illuſtrate its excellency by the expreſſion of benevolent affections to men. A diſpenſation which reveals the Divine attributes, and deſcribes the infirmity of the human nature, endeavours to awaken religious ſentiments by motives of gratitude and intimations of dependence; and the communications of good will towards mankind ſtipulate, as the conditions of favour, a cultivation of thoſe moral virtues, which, while they conciliate peace on earth, contribute to

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an improvement ſuſceptible of heavenly recompence.

The intimate reliance and union that are imported by thoſe declarations, which reſpect the preſidency of Chriſt in ſupreme connection with his Church; and the permanent reſidency of the Spirit, ſanctifying the bodies of the Diſciples of our Lord in adaptation to ſuch affinity; furniſh to religious reflection the moſt awful conſiderations to enforce an imitation of that great example by which we are required to model ourſelves in conformity to "one body and one Spirit."

To the preſervation of the coherence and union of the frame, which was formed in dependency on him who was the myſtical head, the inſpired writers diſplay an earneſt ſolicitude; labour to produce "the effectual work-"ing in the meaſure of every part," only to advance a proportioned and improving ſymmetry of the body, "increaſing unto the "edifying of itſelf in love." With fervent and reiterated ſupplication they intreat the brethren, in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that they "all ſpeak the ſame thing, and "that there be no diviſions among them, "but that they be perfectly joined together "in the ſame mind and in the ſame judg-"ment;"

" ment;" that rejecting claſſes of diſtinction, and titles of ſectaries, they ſhould all unite in " one faith," under " one Lord." For trivial matters, and " fooliſh queſtions, and " oppoſitions of ſcience, falſely ſo called*," it is forbidden to enter into vain and unprofitable controverſy, and " doubtful diſpu- " tations †;" while in perfect conſiſtency with theſe principles, and with deſign to ſecure the integrity of the body, are thoſe, who are called in one hope, inſtructed to " take " heed unto their doctrine ‡;" to contend for the faith once delivered to the ſaints; to " hold faſt the form of ſound words §," and the man who is an heretic after the firſt and ſecond admonition to reject ||.

From the tendency of theſe and ſimilar precepts, compared and followed up in the connection of their deſign, may be deduced the moſt important inſtruction for the maintenance of that faith and that charity, which ſhould be joined in inſeparable union.

In conſideration of the faith commended

* 1 Tim. ch. vi. ver. 20.
† Romans, ch. xiv. ver. 1—17. Galat. ch. v. ver. 6.
‡ 1 Tim. ch. iv. ver. 16. Theſſ. ch. ii. ver. 15.
§ 2 Tim. ch. i. ver. 13.
|| Titus, ch. iii. ver. 10.

by

by the ſacred writers, it is evident that it is repreſented as the object not of conſtrained and involuntary conviction, but of rational enquiry. The teſtimony which is offered to the obſervation of the mind, is not obtruded as a light to overpower its faculties with irreſiſtible impreſſion; but unfolds itſelf with gradual diſplay, and increaſing evidence, as it is viewed with ſteady and perſevering examination. The underſtanding is invited, by alluring conſiderations, to liberate itſelf from the dominion of thoſe paſſions which obſtruct the exerciſe of the intellectual powers; is called upon to "ſearch the Scriptures," and "to try the Spirits, whether they be "of God *." Striking arguments preſent themſelves to the moſt careleſs and uninſtructed mind, and are ſufficiently brought forward by the teachers and paſtors whom God has provided. The Goſpel beareth the ſtamp of the Divine ſeal, and commends itſelf to all by the conformity of its principles to the deductions of reaſon; but as external confirmation is ſought, as retired witneſſes are examined, the documents multiply, the de-

* See John, ch. v. ver. 39. Acts, ch. xvii. ver. 11. 2 Cor. ch. xiii. ver. 5. 1 Theſſal. ch. v. ver. 21.

monſtration

monſtration ſtrengthens. Every date that accuracy explores may contribute to ſubſtantiate the completion of prophecy; and every record which diligence revolves may corroborate that impreſſive evidence which is deducible from the examination of the general ſuffrage of works of every deſcription; of records diſperſed through different countries in different languages, and often reſcued, in modern times, from privacy and neglect. Hence it is that literature and knowledge are auſpicious to religion, and anxious to conſecrate their ſervices to its cauſe; and hence it is that thoſe men of ſuperficial attainments, who are "carried about" with the impulſe of every variation, are found to reaſon rather from ſpeculative fancy than from hiſtorical reſearch: indulge a ſcepticiſm of conjecture; and while they acquieſce in the vague conceptions of their own mind, indolently decline, or faſtidiouſly refuſe, to inſtitute that ſearch which is neceſſary to correct error, and to inſtruct ignorance.

As the ſedulity of enquiry is repreſented to be ſerviceable to the adoption of faith, ſo is the firmneſs of conſtancy deemed eſſential to its preſervation. Aware of the crafty induſtry of thoſe, who by deceiving others derive a fancied

fancied countenance in evil; revelation delivers injunctions, that, after having attained the full ſtature of manhood, we ſhould no longer betray the fickle inſtability of children; that when the whole chain of evidence, which connects the ſcheme of religion, has been examined in all its links, and the hopes of mankind have appeared to be ſuſpended in ſure reliance on the Divine mercy, we relinquiſh not ſuch dependency for the illuſions of the human fancy; that having, after mature deliberation, "learned, "and been aſſured" of the truth, we abide by it, and attempt not to walk on the precarious waves of life with that unconfirmed faith which cannot but ſink amidſt the dangers that it will experience.

The examination and conſtancy which ſhould influence and confirm our convictions of the general evidence and doctrines of religion, ſhould alſo regulate our conduct as to the external profeſſion of the faith, and operate in guiding us as to our reſort to, and abode in, thoſe courts in which truth appears beſt to flouriſh. A continuance in communion with any congregation in which fundamental errors ſanction corrupt worſhip, cannot be juſtified by any conſiderations of cuſtom, of kindred, or

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of ſubmiſſion to earthly decrees. Better were it for two or three to aſſemble in private ſincerity; better were it to retreat to the ſolitary chamber, which looketh towards God's temple, though it expoſe us to the perſecution of unrighteous men *, than to partake of the ſins of thoſe who violate the poſitive ordinances of God. But, on the other hand, a dereliction of any duly conſtituted Church, upon objections of inconſiderable moment, is a diſſevering of that union which is highly acceptable to God; and a criminal act, involving a reſponſibility in proportion to the departure from truth, and the diſſenſion and enmity which it muſt neceſſarily occaſion †.

As the hope and expectation of union is built on the preſumption of ſincere enquiry, the preſervation of it is with propriety conſidered as within the province and power of the will. Guilt is repreſented to aſſociate itſelf to the wanderings of error, and wickedneſs appears to overſhadow the ſteps which depart from truth.

* Dan. ch. vi. ver. 10.

† Unity in the Church, ſays Thorndyke, is of ſo great advantage to the ſervice of God, that it ought to overſhadow and cover very great imperfections in the laws of the Church. See Preface to Epilogue.

With

With deſign to enforce the application of theſe momentous conſiderations, we ſhall endeavour, in the concluſion of our general ſubject, to demonſtrate the following propoſitions. Firſt, that as far as reſpects our immediate conduct, the preſervation of the unity of the faith will be moſt effectually conſulted by an adherence to the fundamental principles which appear to have been adopted by our Church, upon the moſt deliberate regard to experience, the intereſts of religion, and the welfare of ſociety; and ſecondly, that while it is the duty of all claſſes of men to promote ſuch further regulations as ſhall be proved to be clearly expedient and favourable to the advancement of Chriſtianity, a ſtrict attention ſhould be paid to the maintenance of that peace and harmony which reſult from obſervance of the charitable leſſons of revelation.

In conſideration of the ſubjects which have paſſed in review before us in the ſucceſſive parts of our continued diſquiſition, it has appeared, it is preſumed, with ſufficient, though imperfect illuſtration, that the Church of England has not only been reformed from thoſe abuſes which for many ages diſparaged the fame, and obſtructed the effects of Chriſtianity,

tianity, but that it has been eſtabliſhed, as to its main pillars, on principles eſſential to the character, and favourable to the impreſſions, of religion.

The excellency of thoſe principles muſt always be eſtimated by a reference to the evils from which they delivered us; and with regard to paſſions which are ever ready to renew their miſchief, and to convert the Eden, which God hath planted, into a ſcene of condemnation and conſcious diſobedience. For this reaſon it was judged neceſſary to dilate with full, though not exaggerated deſcription, on the exceſſive growth and gigantic ſtature of that ſpiritual tyranny which was deſtroyed by the firſt ſpear of the Reformers*; and thoſe who will revert to the cauſes

* It is expedient ſometimes to revive the memory of the real character of the papal uſurpations, ſince the preſent advocates for the ſupremacy endeavour to repreſent its moſt extravagant pretenſions to have been grounded on reaſonable and ſalutary principles. Thus Mr. Robert Plowden aſſerts, that the depoſing power of the Pope was founded on an agreement between all Chriſtian people, to have their government ſettled by the arbitration of the Pope; and that whenever diſputes aroſe concerning the rights and intereſts of religion, the ſovereign, who was depoſed, was bound to ſubmit to the ſentence, in conſequence of a ſuppoſed compact between the governor and governed, to abide by the terms which the arbitrator ſhould fix. Such fictitious agreements and imaginary compacts might exiſt in the ambitious ſchemes of the Papal policy;

cauſes which conſpired to the riſe and increaſe of that dominion of ſuperſtition, which is happily paſſed away, will be convinced that the principles, which in ſummary recapitulation we ſhall ſtate, cannot be deſerted without the hazard of incalculable evils.

A departure from the great and primary principle, approved by our Reformers, as to the ſeparate authority of every national Church, and voluntary return of any Proteſtant congregation to ſubjection to a foreign juriſdiction, is little to be apprehended. A further eſtabliſhment of the principle may, indeed, on reaſonable grounds of confidence, be expected; and the unheeded voice, which ſtill preſerves the title, and repeats the claim of univerſal paſtorſhip*, while the circle of the ſupremacy ſeems faſt contracting to the verge of a wretched territory, but echoes the expiring pretenſions of an antichriſtian vanity; and intimates the deſtined completion of thoſe pre-

but the right of interference of the Pope, as umpire in temporal concerns between the ſovereign and his ſubjects, was never admitted by independent ſtates, excepting under the preſſure of dire neceſſity; though indeed tyrants and rebels occaſionally availed themſelves of it, to ſanctify oppreſſion and revolt. See Letter on Theological Inaccuracy, p. 97.

* Licet inmerito paſtoris univerſalis. Letters from Rome, printed by J. P. Coghlan, in 1794.

dictions

dictions which directed their infallible threats againſt the ambition that ſhould "oppoſe "and exalt itſelf above all that is called "God, or that is worſhipped."

In this country ſome of thoſe, who are among the moſt reſpectable deſcendants of its ancient advocates, have not only abjured its temporal and depoſing powers, but have at length conſidered themſelves as enfranchiſed from its ſpiritual dominion; aſſerting "the proper and independent juriſdiction of "ſeparate dioceſes*," their inherent authority of appointing their own biſhops †, uncontrolable by, and requiring not the confirmation of a diſtant pontiff; the right of every Church "to deliver its own belief, and tra-"ditions, and maxims;" and vindicating every other eſſential privilege, compatible with ſuch faint and indiſtinct reverence as they ſtill profeſs to the titular pre-eminence of an ancient ſee. Such have alſo, at the ſame time, advanced towards other principles of the Re-

* See State and Behaviour of Engliſh Catholics, p. 153.

† The right which ſome of the Ciſalpine Romaniſts claim of electing their own biſhops, when not ſupported by an eſtabliſhment, is conſiſtent with primitive precedent. Where the civil power confers or ratifies the endowment, it is reaſonable that it ſhould nominate the perſon; whether by Congé d'Elire, or any other form, is of little importance.

formation, in contending for the general uſe of the Scriptures in the vulgar language *; in conſidering them as the teſt and criterion of all human pretenſions; in diſcriminating between the authority of the canonical and the apocryphal books; in correcting the corruptions of the Vulgate; in diſallowing the exiſtence of an unerring authority of interpretation †; in admitting the propriety of a public ſervice in the language of the people; in diſclaiming the Canons of the Council of Trent, at leaſt as to diſcipline; and in confeſſing that they have diſcovered in their Church, a departure from primitive ſimplicity, and abuſes in vulgar practice; in acknowledging the validity of the ordinations of our Church ‡; and in intimating the diſtruſt of the grounds on which the celibacy of the prieſthood was impoſed.

* By the 4th rule of the Index of Pius the Fourth, the reading of the Scriptures in tranſlation, unleſs permiſſion were obtained, was forbidden; and in Clement the Eighth's edition of this Index, biſhops and inquiſitors were deprived of the power to grant a licence either to read or retain Bibles in the vulgar tongue. See Dr. Geddes's Letter to the Rev. John Douglas.

† Berington's Reflections to the Rev. John Hawkins. Sir John Throckmorton's Letter to the Catholic Clergy.

‡ See Geddes's Letter to the Rev. John Douglas; in which the learned writer confeſſes that he ſhould have no ſcruple in acknowledging the juriſdiction of the Engliſh biſhops, and in communicating with them, p. 35.

Theſe

Theſe conceſſions ſhould not paſs unnoticed; and we may hope, that, as the ſure and ſilent conviction of truth ſhall further prevail over the prejudice of early impreſſions, a nearer approximation may be witneſſed in thoſe, who, as they ſhall diſpaſſionately inveſtigate the chief deciſions of our Church, will find them ſanctioned in proportion as the excluſive authority of revelation ſhall triumph over the exploded infallibility of human decrees, and the diſcordant reports of jarring traditions.

If, in tracing the operation of truth, we cannot be gratified with the ſame effects, where the ties of eſtabliſhed connection with a foreign and uſurped authority ſtill ſubſiſt; and are compelled to contemplate many who "ſeeing, "ſee not, and hearing, will not hear," who perſiſt in the indiſcriminate vindication of every error, and, under the ſanction of the Papal example* and authority, ſtill retain the language

* No conſiderations can induce the policy of Rome to mitigate its injurious ſtatements, or forego its repreſentations of our Church as heretical. In a Letter, addreſſed Nov. 21, 1792, to the archbiſhops, biſhops, abbots, abbeſſes, chapters, and clergy of Germany, on the ſubject of the emigrant French clergy, are the following remarkable words, of invidious diſtinction. "Nos "certe maximâ laude cumulare debemus non ſolum principes, "paſtores, et populos Catholicos, qui per evangelium edocti

language of ancient hoſtility againſt our Church, and withhold a teſtimony to its unrefuted claims *; it ſhould lead us certainly, while we plead for the fulleſt toleration conſiſtent with the ſecurity of the eſtabliſhment, and applaud the generous policy of the legiſlature which conſents to accept of ſuch pledges of civil allegiance as are framed with indulgent deference to every conſcien-

" et *veræ charitatis ſpiritu inflammati*, hos benigne exceperunt " fidei confeſſores, eoſque impensâ ſuâ alendos ſumpſerunt; ſed " principes etiam et *populos acatholicos*, et in his præſertim Mag- " næ Britanniæ Regem illuſtrem, et inclytam illius regni natio- " nem, qui omnes erga ſui ſimiles *ducti quodam ſpiritu humani- " tatis*, ut ait S. Ambroſius, iiſdem ſubſidia ſuppeditarunt, *emu- " lantes gloriam antiquorum Romanorum*, apud quos videbatur " valde decorum patere domos hominum illuſtrium hoſpitibus " illuſtribus." The words are extracted, in repetition, in a letter, written September 17, 1794, to the Biſhop of Leon. See Letters from Rome. Throughout the Epiſtles, the word humanitas is employed to deſcribe the benevolence of the Engliſh nation; while pietas and charitas are repreſented as the pure ſources of the German charity. Such then is ſtill, on ſuch an occaſion, the ſpirit of the Roman councils!

* Notwithſtanding the validity of the Engliſh ordinations is admitted by ſome writers of the Romiſh Church, it is ſtill denied by moſt of its members; and even by ſome who have relaxed in other points, but are unwilling to allow our Church to be a true Church, and who perſiſt alſo in charging us with hereſy. " Crimen ita grave (ſays Jewell) ut niſi videatur, niſi " palpetur. niſi manibus digitiſque teneatur, credi facile de " homine Chriſtiano non debeat. Eſt enim hæreſis deſtitutio " ſalutis, abjectio gratiæ Dei, diſceſſio a corpore et ſpiritu " Chriſti." See Apol. and Berington's Addreſs to the Proteſtant Diſſenters, printed by Swinney, Birmingham.

tious

tious ſcruple *, ſtill vigilantly to expoſe the tendency of any opinions that militate againſt profeſſions † of duty, and betray ſomewhat of unaltered attachment to dangerous principles ‡.

As

* The oath required by 31ſt of his preſent Majeſty, and taken by moſt of the Roman Catholics, is contrived to remove all the objections which were reaſonably urged by the advocates for the ſpiritual authority of the Pope againſt the oath of Elizabeth; who, though ſhe did not ſeize the Cenſer, ſeems at firſt, like her predeceſſors, to have conſidered herſelf as inveſted with all the authority which the Pope had claimed in this country. It is accommodated alſo to relieve the ſcruples of thoſe who objected to the words impious, heretical, and damnable, in later oaths.

† It is with regret that we diſcover many ſentiments in the writings of ſome who have taken the oath, which appear inconſiſtent with the declarations of allegiance; as where we find it aſſerted, that no Catholic can conſcientiouſly give his ſanction to the civil eſtabliſhment of any other religion than that of the Romiſh Church; ſee Letter to Francis Plowden, Eſq; and where, in profeſſing the character of a good ſubject, it is not thought neceſſary to be a better ſubject than the Roman Catholics were in the reign of an Elizabeth, excommunicated by the Pope, or in the reign of the Stuarts, to whom they refuſed allegiance. See Divine Right of Epiſcopacy, by the Rev. John Milner.

‡ General intimations and hints againſt civil eſtabliſhments of religion; elaborate apologies for the ancient pretenſions of the Papal uſurpation; vindications of the conſecration oath, according to the form of Clement VIII. which promiſes to defend the royalties of St. Peter, to enlarge the authority of the Pope, and to perſecute, or at leaſt to purſue heretics, and which was not only deſigned as an oath of fealty by ſome of the Popes, but is repreſented as ſuch by moderate Romaniſts; theſe and ſimilar effuſions of zeal, together with ſome indications of ſubterfuge as to the oath of allegiance, which ſtill occaſionally appear in the productions of the rigid adherents to the Ultramontane

As to the ſecond ſubject of reflection; the conſiderations upon which a civil inſtitution of religion is ſupported, in conformity with the deſign and character of a ſpiritual diſpenſation in this country, are, it is conceived, of ſufficient importance to demonſtrate the propriety, if not the neceſſity, of an eſtabliſhment; which, as we have ſeen, is calculated to ſuppreſs that dangerous vibration of uncertain intereſts, which reſults from the univerſal wiſh to confirm the aſcendency of the faith moſt approved; and is contrived to furniſh a competent proviſion for the miniſtry; the limitation of the powers, privileges, and revenues of which prevents unjuſtifiable aſſumption, at the ſame time that it precludes the temptation to any perverſion of religion, in accommodation to ſecular views *.

The ſpiritual rights of the prieſthood muſt continue to be revered, wherever a regard is paid to the claims of a Divine commiſſion,

principles, are not calculated to ſuppreſs thoſe ſuſpicions which are at all times, perhaps, too ready to break forth, and which have been revived of late by a jealouſy of ſome prominent circumſtances, and noticeable induſtry in this country.

* The clergy of a well-conſtituted eſtabliſhment cannot exceed the bounds marked out by the civil power; but where men are to ſubſiſt, and riſe by ingenuity, even religion will be employed in ſubſerviency to human contrivance.

and

and the eſſential conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church.

The fallibility of all human judgment, and the excluſive title of revelation to direct the faith of mankind, are alſo principles which cannot be rejected, without detriment to, or deſtruction of, the intereſts of religion. By the neglect of theſe great and ſimple truths, the abuſes of the Roman Church were introduced; and our ſeparation from its communion rendered neceſſary. Where they ſhall be reſpected, ſincerity of faith will be renewed, and corruptions of doctrine and worſhip diſappear; and the Catholic Church, however partaking of earthly defects, will exhibit a renewed ſplendour, in which the Almighty may "take pleaſure, and be glorified," as in an houſe in which "the ſilver and the gold "ſhall be the Lord's *;" in which an united Trinity ſhall with undivided attention be adored, and eſſential ſacraments, with reſtricted veneration, be obſerved; on which the Lord ſhall beſtow peace, the effect of unity, and the reward of fidelity and attachment.

Waving farther retroſpect, as engaged only in the examination of the leading principles

* Haggai, ch. ii. ver. 6—9.

of

of our Church; and preſuming that the characteriſtic doctrines of its faith, which we have had occaſion in curſory repreſentation to ſtate, have been ſufficiently vindicated by different writers, to juſtify our conſideration of them as eſſential to the intereſts of religion, we ſhall proceed to the ſecond ſubject of diſcuſſion; under which it is propoſed to ſhew, that, while it is the duty of all claſſes of men to promote ſuch farther regulations, as ſhall be proved to be clearly expedient and favourable to the advancement of Chriſtianity, a ſtrict attention ſhould be paid to the conſervation of that peace and harmony which reſult from obſervance of its charitable leſſons.

The importance and beneficial tendency of thoſe remedial meaſures, which were the effect of a temperate ſpirit of Reformation, cannot be traced without leading the attention to the approval of a conſtant care and vigilance for ſuch renovation and improvement of external appointments, as may be judged ſalutary and expedient.

The propriety of "the putting away" of ſuch evils as ſhall appear in any conſiderable degree to counteract the influence of religion, and to be capable of removal without manifeſt injury

injury or hazard to conſtitutions already ſealed and confirmed as permanent and univerſal, is a principle perfectly conſiſtent with the ſpirit of our Church, which in its human authority claims no irreverſible deciſion, and enacts no unchangeable decrees; and which indeed hath ratified the maxim of "keeping the "mean;" as to public inſtitutions and ordinances, "between the two extremes of too "much ſtiffneſs in refuſing, and of too much "eaſineſs in admitting any variation from "it *;" deſirous of giving laſting ſolidity to its eſtabliſhment, by improving its excellencies, and by perfecting its defective parts.

This maxim, which the wiſdom of our Church has ſanctioned, is diſcountenanced, in its reſtricted and defined extent, by none who look with ſincerity to the advancement of religion.

That different ſentiments ſhould be entertained, as to the deſcription of what conſtitutes remediable defects, and as to the advantage of change, where extenſive conſequences are concerned, muſt be expected, from the diſcordancy of human opinions; and from the more enlarged or confined views which are

* Preface to Common Prayer.

taken

taken with regard to the expediency and probable effect of thoſe meaſures which are to derange ſettled ſyſtems. If, where preſent intereſts are concerned, ſome reluctance to liſten, even to reaſonable propoſitions, may be ſuſpected to bias the judgment, without imputation, beyond what muſt attach from the general operation of human feelings, it is uncandid and unjuſt to impeach the ſincerity of convictions expreſſed on points, to which conſiderations of intereſt do not extend. The looſe and invidious charge which is often intimated againſt the members of our eſtabliſhment, of an indiſpoſition to meaſures of farther reformation, however adviſable and ſalutary, is harſh and unmerited. An unwillingneſs to aſſent to the vague and captious objections of thoſe, whoſe complaints indicate the luſt of change, and the malevolence of undiſcriminating hatred, they may indeed be ſuppoſed to feel; and it is reaſonable that they ſhould ſcrutinize with a jealous eye, and ſhrink with cautious apprehenſion from thoſe projects of undefined reform, which are ever fraught with miſchief to ſociety; which provide no remedies for the grievances invidiouſly detailed; which betray only perſonal feelings and intereſted views, and ſeem to conſpire

ſpire to the deſtruction, rather than to the amendment of exiſting conſtitutions. They cannot but obſerve, that much of the clamour for improvement, which is often raiſed but to invigorate the repreſentations of diſcontent, is ſounded on fallacious and partial ſtatement, and on a conſideration of thoſe evils, which no change but that of human depravity could totally eradicate. They perceive that falſe concluſions are often drawn from reflection, on the want of apparent effects of Chriſtianity, on the lives and manners of men, becauſe ever unwilling to trace evils to their own diſaffection to religious duties, and to diſcern the ſource to which reformation ſhould direct its firſt attention, many are deſirous that the inefficacy of inſtruction, of which there is complaint, ſhould be aſcribed to injudicious regulations in the Church; and it ſhould in juſtice be remembered, that whatever defects, real or imaginary, may be attributed to its appointments, they prevent not the uncorrupted communication of revealed truth; the conſtant and emphatical teaching of that wiſdom, which every where "crieth aloud and uttereth her voice." Still, however, it is a cenſure as unſupported by fact, as by any ground of credible accuſation,

tion, which repreſents the profeſſed advocates of truth, as dazzled by any new diſcovery of its principles * ; and as diſinclined to unite in any rational and ſeaſonable propoſition for the remedy of ſpecific grievances, or for the promotion of objects which can be proved likely to facilitate the deſign of religion ; however they may be unwilling to tamper with rude and ſpeculative innovation on a work which with " great labour was faſhioned †," and however they may be deſirous that every alteration, of long-approved appointments, ſhould originate, as did the reformation, with thoſe, whom due authority, and fidelity of attachment, may reſtrain from injuring a ſtructure of unequalled excellence ‡.

The temporal intereſts of the clergy are not implicated, as were thoſe of the Romiſh Church, in the maintenance of any tenet or ordinance, the removal of which might be conſidered as favourable to the diffuſion of truth, and calculated to advance agreement of opinion. Many among them have

* See Gibbon's poſthumous Memoirs.

† 2 Eſdras, ch. viii. ver. 14.

* Three things are neceſſary to make a public reformation lawful, ſays Biſhop Bramhall—juſt grounds, due moderation, ſufficient authority. Schiſm, p. 114.

earneſtly

earneſtly laboured to promote a reviſal of the Liturgy, and a correction of the eſtabliſhed verſion of the Scriptures: and the oppoſition of thoſe who diſcourage theſe deſigns, ſhould in candour be allowed to be conſcientious and diſintereſted; to proceed from a conviction that the particulars, which are alledged to require alteration, are too inconſiderable to juſtify a revival of thoſe controverſies, which appear to have raged with violence in proportion as they have been barren and unimportant; and that the advantages which could reſult from the amendment of ſlight defects would not counterbalance the miſchief which would accrue from unſettling the minds of thoſe, who are ſatisfied with the general excellency of theſe great works.

The diſcreet and temperate alterations of the Liturgy, which many eminent members of our Church have approved *, and which, while they led to a removal of blemiſhes,

* The laſt review of the Liturgy, as it now ſtands, was made in 1661. In 1689 a commiſſion was iſſued for a farther review, in conformity with the articles tranſmitted to Convocation by Archbiſhop Sancroft, and the advice of Tillotſon. The ten biſhops, and twenty other divines, who prepared a draft of the work, agreed in twenty points, ſome of which at leaſt deſerved great regard; and it is to be lamented that the deſign, and alſo ſome ſubſequent attempts, entirely failed.

prejudiced

prejudiced none of thoſe doctrines which are often interwoven with addreſſes to the Deity; and are deſigned to direct attention to thoſe attributes of the Divine nature, and thoſe objects of faith, which impreſs the mind with a conviction of truth, and animate religious affections, would probably ere this time have been adopted, had not the agitation of the ſubject, been found to generate among thoſe, who have ſhewn no diſpoſition to uſe even its unexceptionable parts, the requiſition of ſuch unqualified alterations as could not be conceded without relinquiſhment of eſſential points.

With reſpect to the correction of ſuch paſſages of the eſtabliſhed verſion of the Scriptures, as by general conſent ſhould be allowed to be erroneous, it is probable, that, as it has been ſtrenuouſly recommended, ſo, it will be chiefly accompliſhed by the clergy, whenever it ſhall be judged expedient. Conſcious that the renderings which might be improved, require amendment rather from conſideration of the ſcrupulous fidelity due to every line of Divine inſtruction, than from any great importance in the miſconſtructions; and ſenſible that every caution muſt be neceſſary to guard againſt the ſtrained and partial interpretations

tions of prejudice, they pauſe at the difficulties and moment of ſuch an undertaking; while many of them have, by admirable tranſlations of individual books, furniſhed the nobleſt proofs of their zeal for religion and ſacred literature; and though their works would not, it appears, as to their general ſtyle and ſtructure, reconcile us to a departure from the uniform and majeſtic ſimplicity of the eſtabliſhed verſion, have deſerved the higheſt praiſe for fidelity of interpretation and ſpirit of compoſition; while feebler efforts have only ſerved to prove the diſhoneſt arts and preſumptuous vanity of individuals, and the difficulty of finding men who might compoſe an aſſembly worthy to review the work which now we reverence, and to weigh, with comprehenſive and impartial accuracy, the propriety of every change.

If it were judged proper, that the clergy ſhould again aſſemble to effectual purpoſes in Convocation, it is probable, that thoſe projects might be deliberately conſidered and matured; and that, in the legitimate exerciſe of eccleſiaſtical authority, ſome explanatory emendation of ſuch points of profeſſion as have been miſconceived or miſrepreſented, and ſome modification of particulars, of external and

variable regimen, might be adopted, and obtain the concurrence of the civil power: and it could not but be a ſubject of rational and temperate exultation, if the repreſentative council were at leaſt occaſionally reſtored to the exerciſe of its conſtitutional functions; to provide, under corrected impreſſions, for the government of the Church, to prevent any inſenſible accretion of abuſes, and to preſerve and renovate, from time to time, the integrity of its inſtitutions.

In every conſtitution, however, it is more eaſy to diſcover blemiſhes * than to point out the mode by which they may be rectified; and he who is ſo engroſſed by partial defects as to undervalue the great and peculiar advantages of our eſtabliſhment, muſt be little converſant with the obſtacles and impediments which operate to the prejudice of religion in every other country. The advocates for the eſtabliſhment vindicate it, not as free from all imperfections, but as pre-eminently

* The chief evils which are to be lamented under our eſtabliſhment, are the impoveriſhment of the laborious ſtations of the Church, by alienations and corrupt agreements; the exemption of peculiar diſtricts from regular juriſdiction; the erection of Chapels for private ſpeculation and management, and the ſimoniacal diſpoſal of preferment. Thoſe who will encounter political ſtruggles for the reformation of theſe abuſes, will experience little oppoſition from the clergy.

entitled

entitled to reverence, from the unexceptionable principles upon which its chief foundations reſt; and as requiring no change which would juſtify any riſk of injury to a work, ſo admirable in its general character.

Deſirous as its members are for the promotion of that union which reſults from the conformity of a common faith, and the convention of a common worſhip, it cannot be by the ſacrifice of eſſential principles; and thoſe who, no longer diſſenting from our Church on trivial grounds of diſtinction, reject either the doctrines which we eſteem neceſſary to a ſaving faith *; or the form of diſcipline which we conſider as moſt conducive to good government, as well as moſt agreeable to primitive appointments, we can hope to gain only by conciliatory perſuaſion and ſound reaſoning, which cannot be controverted. Truth, fully canvaſſed, finally muſt

* The proper godhead of Chriſt is certainly admitted by a conſiderable part of the Diſſenters. We are concerned, however, to notice a declenſion from the doctrine of the Trinity in many of the Calviniſtical congregations; and that even Dr. Watts's Pſalms and Hymns, which had been ſo long approved in them, and the uſe of which is alledged by Mr. Beſt to prove the orthodoxy of his party in this reſpect, have now, in ſome places, been ſuperſeded by a collection of Dr. Kippis, Rees, Jervis, and Morgan; from which ſome paſſages favourable to the doctrine have been expunged.

triumph; if not by direct advancement, yet by imperceptible intermixture and gradual aſcendency. It is often adopted without acknowledgment, and incorporates itſelf with ſyſtems moſt adverſe to its encouragement.

Convinced, however, that unity of ſentiment, ſimplified to the exact conſiſtency of truth in every point, cannot be expected, while prejudice and paſſion ſhall continue to darken the underſtanding, and miſlead the judgment of men, it imports us, by "bearing with the "infirmities of the weak," to look with indulgence on every variety of colour that may be blended in the purity of the faith; ſolicitous chiefly to diſcourage that pride, which engendereth ſtriſes and contentions, that exclude from the kingdom of heaven *; and which ſeduceth to ſeparation, deſtructive of that fabric of which the architecture is union. The time is indeed come when many "will "not endure ſound doctrine, but, after their "own luſt, heap to themſelves teachers." It concerns us, therefore, "to make full proof "of our miniſtry," "to preach with earneſt-"neſs the Word, to be inſtant in ſeaſon and

* Gal. ch. v. ver. 19—21. 2 Peter, ch. ii. ver. 1. Baxter's Epiſt. to ſeparate Congregations.

"out

" out of ſeaſon, to reprove, to rebuke, to ex-
" hort with all long-ſuffering and doctrine *."

Eſpecial animation is requiſite to diſcountenance that preſumptuous ſpirit, which, trampling on revealed wiſdom, ſeeketh to ſhed a fictitious grace on the forms of human error; which in its wildeſt follies aſſumes the port of ſuperior inſtruction, and the tone of improved philoſophy; which conveys, in indirect alluſion, what it preſumes not, in poſitive aſſertion, to expoſe to refutation; which with popular argument, and not ſeldom with captivating eloquence, affects to plead the right of that reaſon, of which it violates the maxims and diſregards the laws. In ſuch animation the preſent age has been ſometimes repreſented as deficient. The errors of former times were rather thoſe of exceſs, than of want of zeal. When corrupt deſign laboured to profit by the credulity of mankind, the paſſions of thoſe who profeſſed the faith were induſtriouſly inflamed in the pretended cauſe of religion, that they might hurry on, the career of human ambition. In a later period, when the ſpirit of religion recoiled from the ſad effects of bigotry, the controverſies excited by

* 2 Tim. ch. iv. ver. 2—5.

the Reformation kept alive the whole ardour of religious competition. No defect of energy was obſerved in thoſe who aſſailed, or in thoſe who defended the doctrines and inſtitutions ratified by our Church. Religion was the theme of ſocial converſe, and the ſubject of heartfelt concern. Men "talked of it when "they ſat in their houſes, and when they "walked by the way; when they lied down, "and when they roſe up." It was not till the heat of enmity ſubſided, and the eagerneſs of conteſt ceaſed; till wearied by controverſy, and diſguſted by intolerance and hypocriſy, that the languor of indifference began to prevail: which, however ſhaken off by vigorous minds on great occaſions, deadens the general ſpirit of exertion, and commends, as philoſophical, that ſceptical neutrality, which amidſt multiplicity of opinions conſiders all as equally acceptable to the Supreme Being.

The eſtabliſhment of the great and important truth, that no human authority can have a right to dictate its faith to others, hath too often led the modern diſciples of Chriſtianity to forget that it is ſtill an high and momentous obligation to promote the knowledge of revealed truth; to labour for the confirmation of union and conſiſtency of

ſentiment,

ſentiment, and to endeavour, as we would ſave a ſoul from deſtruction, to convert him that erreth; as to avoid the vanity of proſelytiſm to doubtful points, ſo to contend with anxious induſtry for the eſſential tenets of religion *. Vague and ſuperficial is the popular notion, which, from the waverings of error, would deduce the uncertainty of truth, and repreſent impreſſions of faith as capable of variation, without offence to God, or prejudice to mankind †; ſince it cannot on reflection

* The reader may find ſome very juſt conſiderations on the ſubject of indifferency in matters of religion, in a work entitled, A Treatiſe concerning Religion, in Refutation of the Opinion which counts all indifferent, by Moſes Amyrault, a profeſſor of divinity, in the laſt century, at Saumur, who was conſulted by Cardinal Richelieu on the plan of effecting a reunion between the Romiſh and Proteſtant Churches. It deſerves to be noticed, that this judicious author, who wrote in the year 1660, obſerves, that this indifferency, which he conſiders as calculated to ſtifle all true ſentiments of piety, and to baniſh out of the earth all mention of the name of God, began to bear great vogue in France, inſomuch that a conſiderable number of thoſe perſons, who were eſteemed the moſt poliſhed for literature and courtly accompliſhments, were imbued with it; and that even ſome, who bore the title of Divines, inclined to favour it: that the profane humour was immortal, and gathered ſtrength every day, ſprouting and enlarging to the ſhame of the age.

† The *reaſoning* in Mr. Knight's admired poem, relating to modes of faith, as it had been attempted by Mr. Pope with ſo little ſucceſs, might as well have been omitted; and his poetry have been ſatisfied with "feeding on fantaſtic dreams," without undermining religious principles, and weakening the mo-

flection be disputed, that the religious principle which emanates from the Divine nature must be uniform and unchangeable; that if revelation be imparted, it cannot be permitted to us, to reject its laws; that devotion will be pure, as it reveres its doctrines, and morality be perfect, as it is enforced by its sanctions, and moulded on its wisdom.

If the proofs of Christianity have been amply collected, if the reasonings of former times have been concentered with conspicuous and convincing demonstration, the general classes of society should be familiarized with its evidence, and impressed with more regular and systematic instruction than it must be confessed they appear to be. The luke-warm indifference, which feels no wish to promote the extension of Christian knowledge, indicates a disposition that leads to the decay of all religion, and is more offensive in the sight of God than the coldness of disbelief, or the heat of intemperate zeal*. Avowed incredulity may be satisfied with palpable and

tives of morality; the effect of which could only be, to accelerate that gloomy state of ruin which his imagination depicts.

* Revel. ch. iii. ver. 15.

convincing

convincing evidence; the eager ſpirit, which even perſecuteth, may be enlightened to diſcern its error; but thoſe who have heard and acknowledged a voice from heaven, who have "ſeen, and felt," and "handled of the word of "life," and yet are not animated by a deſire to proclaim their Lord, and to expreſs their veneration for his cauſe, follow him but to violate his ſervice, to deny or to betray him. They join in the Hoſannah's of the multitude without dignity, celebrate where their praiſes are not heard, and ſhrink and retire where their teſtimony would be acceptable.

An abhorrence of this cold and inanimate ſervice, which Chriſt hath declared he will diſcard, is conſiſtent with the moſt perfect moderation. Fidelity of attachment followeth in the courſe which is preſcribed to its obſervance; true zeal for religion operates by the illuſtration of its character. Reſpecting "the end of the commandment, which is "charity out of a pure heart, and of a good "conſcience, and of a faith unfeigned," it perceiveth that thoſe who take the ſword but periſh by its wounds, and conſidereth all violence as inconſiſtent with the Spirit, and diſſerviceable to the cauſe of religion; as calculated but to provoke reſiſtance, and confirm

firm obſtinacy. Even aſperity in debate, and ſharpneſs in controverſy, which are the only weapons of intolerance in the preſent day, while they betray perſonal feelings rather than a regard to truth, never yet have promoted its advancement. Vain is it to addreſs the judgment, while we irritate and offend the paſſions. Generally, as this is confeſſed, the indignation excited by controverſy ſtill mingles the bitterneſs of reſentment with the refutation of argument. The acrimony which formerly appeared in coarſe and virulent abuſe, now glides, it is true, under a cautious decorum. Still, however, is it equally incompatible with the genuine temper of Chriſtianity; and the deliberate malevolence, which infuſes its fruit by imperceptible drops, is more uncharitable in its preparation, and more ſevere in its tendency, than was the full ſtream of invective formerly poured out; though it circulate through veins not eaſily to be traced, however diſcernible in the general colouring and complexion of the ſtyle.

That deliberate miſrepreſentation ſhould be expoſed, and intentional falſehood rebuked with ſharp and merited reproof, is certain; but the refutation of unintentional error, and the expoſure of miſguided ignorance, might be

be often more advantageouſly conducted, if leſs of perſonal pride and perſonal animoſity appeared. The period will come when the advocate of the faith will receive little praiſe, if it ſhall be found to have maintained its ſpeculative doctrines by the violation of its moral laws. Truth is ſtill too often diſgraced by dictatorial petulance, and Chriſtianity prejudiced in the eyes of many, by that overbearing pride, which of late years has appeared in too many of its profeſſors; in the effuſions of diſguſting vanity, and in the aſſumption of that imperious authority, by which the individual, conſidering himſelf as it were the chief pillar of literature or of religion, dealeth out his peremptory decrees, with a contemptuous diſregard of others, which no diſtinction of talents can excuſe, no pre-eminence of learning juſtify *.

Labouring for truth, which is eſtabliſhed by enquiry, and confirmed by diſcuſſion, remember we, that though it is eternal in its nature, and univerſal in its obligation, it can

* There will come a time, ſays Hooker, when three words uttered with charity and meekneſs ſhall receive a more bleſſed reward than three thouſand volumes written with a diſdainful ſharpneſs of wit. See Preface to Eccleſ. Polity. No one better illuſtrated the ſpirit of charity and meekneſs than the incomparable writer himſelf.

be

be advanced only by gentle meaſures and perſuaſive influence.

As Chriſtianity was firſt promulgated and ſpread abroad by humility, gentleneſs, exhortation, charity, ſo ſhould it be promoted with temperate and conciliatory meaſures. Conſcious that where its communications are not revered, exiſtence is without an object, and life deſtitute of intereſt; integrity precarious, and the hope of immortality unaſſured; ſeek we to diffuſe the light which is mercifully imparted to us. Believing that the chief and eſſential principles of religion are eſtabliſhed as the foundation of our Church, entreat we the Almighty, that as it is built on the faith, ſo it may be cemented by union, and ſtrengthened by charity; that he who "hath in all ages ſhewed forth his power "and mercy in its protection," will continue to defend it; that every danger which ſhall ariſe, like preceding ſtorms, may roll away ineffective; that as it hath proſpered, it may ſtill proſper with the welfare of the country *; and that the Almighty God, who has built his Church upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt being him-

* See Prayer in the Service for the Reſtoration.

ſelf

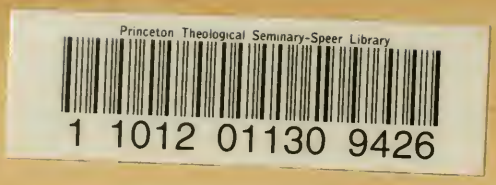
ſelf the corner-ſtone, may grant that we alſo ſhould be joined together in unity of Spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made an holy Temple, acceptable unto him, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord *.

* Collect to St. Simon and St. Jude.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

P. 11, Note *, l. 1, *after* κακιας *add* &c.
l. 2, *after* κακιας *add* Merc. Trif.
P. 25, Note *, l. 10, *for* Caroloſtadt *read* Carloſtadt.
P. 27, Note †, *after* Boet. *add* Le Moyne's Letter to the Biſhop of London.
——— Collier, Vol. II. p. ii. b. 9.
P. 29, Note, *for* Eſdras, ch. iv. ver. 16, *read* 1 Eſdras, ch. iv. ver. 36—40.
P. 50, Note *, l. 3, *inſtead of* verſe 4 *read* verſe 7, and Matt. ch. v. ver. 40.
P. 53, Note *, l. 8, *for* mockery *read* monkiſm.
P. 60, Note ‡, *for* Collyer *read* Collier, and ſo paſſim.
P. 63, l. 6, *for* their *read* its.
P. 160, l. 7, *for* her *read* it.
P. 187, Note *, *for* Maſſalians *read* Meſſalians.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